

PART EIGHT

A GENERAL HISTORY
OF REFORMED
DRUIDISM
IN AMERICA

a.k.a
The Gregarious Epistle of Michael
or
The Adventures of Prolix the Druid

An unofficial and very controversial attempt by Michael Scharding to provide his own personal overview of the main historical events that he believes has affected the development of the various Reformed Druid movements in North America over the first 34 years of their organizational histories, with updates in 2003. Best read in conjunction with the primary materials that are found in the other parts of "A Reformed Druid Anthology".

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(You know an Epistle is way too big when it has a table of contents!)

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Blessing

May the blessings of the all-surrounding Earth-Mother be upon you, gentle reader. May my words find a welcome home with you. Please excuse the gregarious nature of my ramblings. It is over ten times longer than any other epistle in Druidic history, but probably of less value than their compact wisdom. Read it at a slow pace, ponder it, and then tell me what you think of it. Please, do not consider it dogma and try to forgive my errors and biases. If you do this, you may receive the greatest blessing of all.

Dedication

I'd like to dedicate this paper in the memory of my grandparents, Emmet Gerald Scharding and Billie Johnston Scharding, without whose love and funding I would not have been able to attend Carleton or to write this epistle.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks goes to Eric Hilleman for helping me to gather, organize and interpret the International Druid Archives. I'd also like to thank all the people whom I have interviewed to write this paper, especially the Frangquists, the Sheltons, Norman Nelson, Robert Larson and Isaac Bonewits. Mark Heiman is to be thanked for the final visual format.

It would be remiss not to thank Professor Phillip Niles for his superhuman patience with my first six proposals and innumerable redrafts. Without his help, I wouldn't have ever come even close to the dubious quality of this paper.

Prominent Disclaimer

This work is **not** to be assumed to be THE definitive, nor official, statement of the history of Reformed Druidism, regardless of my previous position as Arch Druid of Carleton. This paper is a composite of conversations and documents from past Druids that has been molded by the imposition of my personal thinking processes. It is one history, yea, *one history among many* of what was and is and may be Reformed Druidism. I disagree with some of the trends, but I will try my best to be objective in my presentation. Read this paper with caution, because it will be filled with my biases.

Another note, the RDNA tradition of Carleton has been to call both male and female members, "Druids." I will specifically refer to gender of members if it is necessary. I've also been lazy and used "Neo-Pagan" when I should have put "Neo-Pagan, Wiccan, Followers of the Old Way, Crafters, Worshipers of the Goddess, practitioners of personal spirituality, Polytheists/Pantheists/Duotheist, etc." But that would have eaten up alot of time, and you know what I mean. Also please insert c.e. after all dates.

NOTE: This epistle has little to do with British, Neo-Paganistic, Masonic or other forms of Druidism now in America. We welcome any scholarly comparisons with your groups and we offer the use of our archived materials stored at Carleton.



Figure 1 Group laundry efforts by Druids seeking that sun-fresh smell.

Foreword

1994

The Importance of Origin Stories

Why does a history of Reformed Druidism matter to other modern Druid groups in America? Probably for the same reasons that the study of Judaism and Mithraism is important for studying Christianity. Few religious movements, even spontaneous ones, can resist the temptation to borrow material from other groups. Often this borrowing is never explicitly acknowledged and scholars are forever doomed to waste many precious hours debating where every idea came from, rather than debating what was the importance of the idea. I hope that this history of the RDNA, in some small way, may serve as an origin-story for the other modern Druid movements in America. I certainly hope that other stories will follow and expand the discussions on the influences that I was unable to adequately discuss; for example the full extent of the Neo-Pagan/New Age or Environmental influences upon Reformed Druidism.

All religious movements have a need for origin-stories; i.e. what year did they begin, how did they begin, who started the traditions and (of course) who's to blame for all the crap that has happened since the Golden Age of Founding. These origin-stories help to define whence we came from, to notice how much we've changed, and to help us to decide where we may wish to go. Most religious movements keep rather spotty records in their beginnings, mainly because they are too busy establishing the group. By the time that most origin stories are written down, the Founder(s) are long dead and multifarious myths have obscured much of the truth. Sometimes, as with the ancient Druids, the people never got around to writing down the thoughts, lore and history, and their wisdom has thus vanished into the mists of time.

Not so with the Reformed Druids of North America. Within 2 years of the Founding of Reformed Druidism, a history was written by David Frangquist and efforts were made to preserve early documents and paraphernalia for the edification of future Arch-Druids. Primarily, this was done because of the high turnover rate that is inherent with a college-based group; a system that precluded the establishment of a resident-elder and made oral-based transmission of stories an uncertain risk. From our copious records, and interviews with living members, it is still possible to reconstruct a mildly detailed history of Reformed Druidism in America.

Although it is *possible* to make such a history, I sometimes have wondered if a history *should* even be published. In many ways, Reformed Druidism is far too simple a subject to be written about, for Awareness must be experienced. Even the most complicated explanation cannot contain the complexities of the simplicity that is Reformed Druidism. By even writing a history of Reformed Druidism, I fear that I may lead hasty scholars even further away from the patterns of Reformed Druidism. If I should do so, I apologize and I hope that further careful cross-study and comparison will lead you back to the true purposes and truths of Reformed Druidism. Even worse, I would be terribly saddened if a Reformed Druid, amidst their struggle for awareness, should begin insisting that the "only true" Druidism lies in repeating the ways of the past Reformed Druids. That would be a tragic waste of time on their part and for those who must listen to such rantings.

So Why am I Writing This?

In the spring of 1993, my grove members and previous leaders knew little of our RDNA history. Much of the heritage of the Reformed Druids had been forgotten by the Carleton Grove by the late 1980s, not that this had inhibited their Druidism by the slightest bit. We knew that the RDNA began as a protest movement in 1963, that we supposedly had three orders of membership, that we should be wary of Isaac Bonewits, that we should allow anybody to participate irregardless of their religion and that the RDNA was the ancestral-origin of many modern Druid movements in the United States. Some Druids would have been content with the freedom of ideas that come out of a vague background, but I was a historian by training and stubbornly wished to know what my predecessors had done so as to augment the possibilities of grove activities and to predict the long-term effects and cycles of Druidism on my fellow grove-members and myself.

As a result of this research, I've probably collected and read more Reformed Druid material and talked with more Druids from the different factions than any other Reformed Druid (except possibly Isaac Bonewits). This means that I'm either an "expert" or I am now more irreparably confused in my Druidism than ever as a result. (More than likely it means that three precious years have passed from my youth.) I have always enjoyed reading the "small scale" history of communities and items of local interest, and this is shown in my choice of studying the Reformed Druids. As a result of my research, I firmly believe that the simple lessons that can be learned from Reformed Druidism are just as valid as those from big, "mainstream" religions with millions of members. Perhaps the Reform's lessons are easier to understand since Druidism doesn't require too many presuppositions. The archived discussions that I have read about the simplicity, honesty and omni-compatibility of basic Reformed Druidism have made my "tidying up" of its history a real labor of love and sorrow. I have watched the dramas unfold, both the touching loyalty to ideals and the disappointing misunderstandings between members. Indeed, each and every Reformed Druid has an interpretation and a history that are just as valid and important as this lowly epistle. I now wish to share my insights with others to heal some of the wounds that have festered from the frequent misunderstandings and to enlighten others with a few thoughts that might be applicable to their lives.

As a historian, I have often bewailed and cursed the dead of past ages for not writing down their thoughts and stories for the future generations to read and cherish; but perhaps they wanted us to figure it out for ourselves? In some way, I hope that this book will set a precedent for members of other nascent religious movements to write down their own histories, while the details are fresh in their minds (and make frequent updated versions available). I only wish that those groups will not forget to be spontaneous and willing to discard the past when it is no longer helpful.

Final Thoughts

During this era of unending questioning, I feel most at home with calling myself a Reformed Druid. I am tied to no religious dogma or creed by my association with the RDNA, beyond the two Basic Tenets. The vagueness of Druidism has ironically proved itself to be a sure anchor in my personal search for religious truths in this chaotic world. I am currently studying the teachings of many religious organizations and individuals, with occasional successes and failures here and there. I doubt that I will find any one system capable of answering all my questions; although I'm interested in Zen, Tao and Christianity. Perhaps no

religion is perfectly fitted for me, or perhaps I can not bring myself to fit in any one religion. If so, then I may have to create a religion for myself, or perhaps even create/modify one for every passing moment.... Who knows?, I may find truth in a few years and then look back on all this as a silly moment of confusion. Yet if I find my true faith, I'm sure it will be far richer and more fervent because of the long study and search that I have made for it. In the meantime, Druidism will be my haven during a storm.

-Mike Scharding
 Goodhue Hall 310
 April 1994, revised April 1996

Introduction

(Please, feel free to skip to the first chapter)
 Written in 1996

The purpose of this paper is to drastically re-interpret and provide a general historical overview of a nation-wide movement known as the Reformed Druids of North America and the origins of its various offshoot branches, up to 1996.¹ With the help of newly collected and mostly un-published resources, I will provide a new perspective on the role of Reformed Druidism² in spawning the American Neo-Pagan Druid movement, including the founding of "Ár nDriaocht Féin" (ADF) in 1983 and the Henge of Keltria in 1987. In addition to influencing Neo-Paganism, Reformed Druidism has played a small role in shaping the atmosphere and character of Carleton College.

I hope that this paper will provide better chronological and organizational understanding to future researchers after which they can conduct further studies on the RDNA. A good researcher must use more than one source in order to gain a balanced perspective. The biases of earlier researchers are the result of an over-reliance upon interviews taken solely with Isaac Bonewits (or Fisher) or by a primarily exclusive reliance upon his writings. There are no experts in Reformed Druidism, merely voices who can provide personal definitions. Therefore, I hope that future studies do not use my study as their sole source either. If they do write reports, I hope that they will mail a complementary copy of the document to: Carleton College Archives, 300 North College Street, Northfield, MN, 55057, USA.

For those unacquainted with Reformed Druidism, I will now provide this introductory synopsis to prepare you for a more detailed history of Reformed Druidism and perhaps foreshadow the debates of this paper. I hope that you will find Reformed Druidism to be an attractive case model for use in your future studies.³ By the end of this epistle, I hope that you'll know more about the overall history of Reformed Druidism than most present, past and future members. As for our theology or philosophy, it's relatively simple, and you'll be a master of it by the end (as far as any of us ever will be).

Importance to Carleton College:

Reformed Druidism has a special place in the modern history of Carleton College. Originally conceived as a student protest against mandatory attendance of religious services, the RDNA rapidly became a powerful and personal tool for individuals at Carleton to explore the depths of religious truths and comprehend the religious and cultural diversity of the increasingly pluralistic United States.

Over 33 years old, the Carleton Grove of the RDNA was by far the longest running, largest, extant, *unofficial* student-run organization at Carleton.⁴ It is now an official organization as of May 1995. Probably only 2% of past Carleton students since 1963 have directly participated in at least one RDNA service or have received it's mailings. But, it is likely that a greater number of Carleton students have interacted with Druids (knowingly or unknowingly) or been introduced to an RDNA member's religious/philosophical curiosity over the last 33 or so years. If nothing else, the Druids have become another nostalgic background ornament contributing to Carleton's mystique; joining the ranks of Rott-blatt, Schiller and the Tunnel Graffiti.⁵ The RDNA has also produced a rare, very personal, and unrivaled amount of alumni-student inter-communication and assistance, which alone should attract closer study by Carleton historians.

The RDNA is the only known religion or, if you prefer, group-philosophy, to have indisputably originated at Carleton



Figure 2 Renaissance Druid with altar.



Figure 3 Druid perpetually late for service, hoofing it .

College (and perhaps in Northfield or south Minnesota) and spread so far from home; being a recognizable extension of a Carleton-wide attribute of respectful skepticism towards all matters. As local chapters of the RDNA, called "groves," were established across the nation (at first mostly at colleges), a renaissance of religious exploration and correspondence developed within the RDNA's nurturing anti-dogmatic structure. Importantly, this expansion also brought ideas back to isolated midwestern Carleton students and alumni from Druids experiencing different environments.

I might add that I am not alone in my respect for the importance of the Reformed Druid debates and their impact on Carleton College. The RDNA has probably not had much more than 1,800 total members at Carleton,⁶ but the previous College Archivist, Mark Greene and the current Archivist Eric Hilleman feel that:

"The Druids are one of Carleton's most interesting, long-lived, and (in terms of national following) most influential traditions. As time passes, I hope that their history will receive some scholarly attention, either within or from outside of Carleton."⁷

Importance to the Neo-Pagan Movement:

Upon entering the catalytic environment of the Bay Area and urban Universities in the late 60s/early 70s, some RDNA members quickly allied themselves with the nascent Neo-Pagan movement which was concentrated there. This quick allegiance was made possible by the RDNA's amazing coincidental similarity of liturgy, organization, and doctrine of religious searching, as will be discussed later.

After years of sometimes bitter infighting during the 1970s over how to more "effectively" organize themselves and as a result of a poor economy, a great number of RDNA groves collapsed or went underground. Some members "left" Reformed Druidism to continue the growth of the American Druid Neo-Pagan movement, by founding "Ár nDraíocht Féin," which possesses few immediately recognizable connections to the RDNA, yet they acknowledge the RDNA as their origin.⁸ Yet we should note that RDNA and NRDNA groves have stubbornly continued to persist alongside with the ADF and with ADF's offshoots such as Keltria and Druidactios.⁹ Put together, these three newer groups have currently under 800 paid members in 20+ groves/henges/toutas and perhaps 2000+ irregular attendees. The American Druids have always been a small, very recognizable and reasonably public group within Neo-Paganism. But, their numbers are not so insignificant when one considers that the Neo-Pagan movement has between 50,000 to 200,000 members in America, depending on your statistics.¹⁰ In fact, many people see Reformed Druidism in America as being defined by its larger, noisier offshoots, ADF and Keltria or even by the unrelated British/European Druid or Masonic Druidical movements. As a result, accounts of Reformed Druidism history could easily be falsely portrayed as being fated into *evolving* towards these more noticeable organizations.

Neo-Paganism is a collective umbrella term for nature-oriented religious movements with an intense interest in borrowing from pre-Christian cultures coupled with modern sensibilities. Neo-Paganism has been expanding geometrically since the early 70s and will become more and more noticeable in the future.¹¹ In the coming years, I predict there will be greater number of scholarly studies upon the artistic, musical, liturgical, scholastic, philosophical and theological accomplishments of these highly creative minority religions.¹² These studies will likely be initiated by Neo-Pagan scholars, from secure Neo-Pagan

traditions, who are seeking to unearth and explore their groups' relatively recent historical origins.

Because Reformed Druids have often been playfully pushing the definitional boundaries of "Neo-Paganism" as much as they have with Judeo-Christianity, it will continue to attract some interest. Another attraction with the RDNA for scholars is Isaac Bonewits' prominent presence and well-known activities within Neo-Paganism and Reformed Druidism throughout the 70s, which was prophetic of the progressive Neo-Pagan Druidic religion known as "Ár nDraíocht Féin."

Finally, the extensively archived history of Reformed Druidism will provide those scholars with rich comparative models and materials when writing the future organizational histories of Neo-Pagan movements (especially Druids¹³). This paper will help them overcome the often treacherous, paltry and deceptive misinformation currently available about the RDNA and may even change preconceptions of what a "Druid" organization has to be.

Importance for Religion in the '60s:

Finally, as a side note, this study will remind scholars how the multi-faceted influences of local environment can influence the thinking and structures of local chapters of the same religion/philosophy. With the great advantage of hindsight, I will show how the radically different administrative policies of Carleton College and Berkeley College during the 60's and 70's may have well led to the development of different understandings and methods of protest among student populations and in the local communities. This difference in protest methodology has in turn drastically affected the course of the "Carleton" RDNA faction and that of the "Berkeley/Bay-Area" NewRDNA faction.



Figure 4 Bard from William Blake's poetry.

Chapter One: Resources, Methodology, and Biases

(Casual readers may skip to Chapter Two)

Research Questions

Most Neo-Pagan scholars have never had access to peruse the newly available resources that I have used to write this paper, so I feel it is necessary to explain, at what will seem at an extraordinary length, just what led to my writing this paper. This section may even provide some new research ideas to future scholars of Neo-Pagan history. Non-academics may freely skip ahead to Chapter Two.

I suspect that there will be few groups over ten years old that can resist the attraction of writing a history. Unfortunately, time and resources are often lacking, and they don't have a viable plan to assemble the necessary materials. There are a number of important questions that the Neo-Pagan historian should ask themselves while planning the process of writing a history. Let's explore them.

1. Who am I writing for?

This is the crucial question. There are different types of histories for different types of audiences. Diaries are appropriate for solitaries. While you may pass a diary onto a child or disciple, you want a diary to remind yourself of personally important memories, personal oaths, and to keep track of the effects of spells. Diaries, unlike Shadow Books, often includes the mundane *and* the magical elements of your lives.

If you are writing a history for a handful of close friends or disciples, you may prefer the Book of Shadows format commonly used in Wicca with one large handwritten book being copied by every new member, as ARDA has been for me. Such a book contains a brief description of apostolic succession, basic rites and basic organizational rules. What's more since only initiates will be reading it, you can write very personal details and be free about naming people. Since everyone in the group, knows the ins-and-outs of the group, you could avoid explaining the simple things, place descriptions and take a lot of knowledge for granted.

If you are writing a history for scholarly study or to enlighten other Neo-Pagan groups, you will probably go into about as much depth as a Book of Shadows, but leaving out any craft-secrets (without hopefully making the history unintelligible). You can expect most Neo-Pagans to understand the Neo-Pagan mindset and opinion background, but the average scholar will require explanation of such simple concepts like "the eight festivals," "sabbats," "cones," "degrees" and "athames."

If you are writing a history for a recruitment flyer or leaflet for mass distribution, you need to condense it drastically and emphasize the drawing points, remove personal details and avoid describing conflicts (acrimony may turn off recruits). Apologetic and defensive works are also becoming necessary, now that the fundamentalists are now aiming their venom on the movements.

In my case, I'm writing this Epistle and ARDA collection for the scholarly audience and as an public-oriented "book of shadows." The result, I thoroughly explain the terms, introduce all

the players, tie events into greater sociological cycles, and avoid extremely intimate goofs.

2. What are my biases and reasons?

Identifying and admitting these is a difficult thing to do. Writing a history can lead to some deep soul-searching and you should ask yourself some probing questions. Why are you writing a history? Is it to try to build a historical sequences that support your opinion of what the group's true purpose? Is it to show off your knowledge of the trivia? Are there certain types of people or faction who will resent your history? How much of your groups innovations are actually paralleled by other groups in response to shifts in society? Is it to cover up a disgrace in your organization? Is it to share joyful stories and helpful hints of group coordination? Most of the time we do not recognize what a small pond a coven or a grove is. Do you really know what the real history of your group is? Do you plan to exclude the input of certain people? Why? Are you the best suited person for the job of writing a history or should you co-author it with other people? If you don't like the answers you get from such questions, then beware starting such a task.

3. How will I distribute my history?

There are a number of ways to distribute histories nowadays. I highly recommend that you do it on a computer, as you will amend it several times, and it will give it a professional appearance. Photocopy shops can print and bind small histories rather cheaply now adays. An exciting new method, if you (or a friend) has a talent is that you can set up a web-page and allow people to download files containing your history. You can then just release it on to the Internet and let interested people find it and distribute it to their friends, and it won't cost you a cent after the initial set up.

4. What can I include in a history?

Any thing you'd like. Histories are merely records of what is meaningful to a group of people. Kind of like a big scrapbook. A partial list includes; why a group was founded, chronologies, a series of letters, recipes, sets of bylaws, specialized dictionaries, bibliographies, favorite activities, politics of leadership struggles, jokes, meditations, quotes, mythologies, rituals, blessings, artwork, poetry, music, songs, eulogies, favorite meeting sites, or even stories about how popular members came to join the group. You could even make a video tape documentary. Your imagination is your only limitation.

"The Golden Rule"

Any researcher of Neo-Paganism will understand when I say that a good rule in reconstructing the history of the RDNA (which many "outsiders" consider to be one of the oldest, identifiable, public Neo-Pagan movements) is that disagreement among RDNA members is the general reality and that agreements are the unusual exception. Each individual Reformed Druid (esp. Californian ones) had a different purpose and view of what Druidism meant to them. Although this diversity could apply to members of many mainstream religions, rarely do we see a group give as much free reign, affirmation and empowerment to the individual's beliefs as we find in Reformed Druidism. With that in mind, it is appropriate to beware rashly accepting any statements in documents claiming to be authoritative upon a Neo-Pagan group's beliefs (especially in Reformed Druidism) and to realize that any such statement may be a disguised personal bias (such as this Epistle, for example). The type of person who leaves written

documents may be quite different from the person who does not feel the need to canonize their ideas on paper.

In the case of the RDNA, the "authorities" have tended to be the Third Order Druids who left us the majority of the contemporary written documents and wrote most of the inter-communications on "key" issues. Much of the time, they were also the only ones knowledgeable about the existence and politics of inter-grove communications. Therefore, it is fitting that they should be my primary informants since I am constructing a history on inter-grove activity and organizational change.

However, in future histories about specific groves, there will need to be a great number more interviews of 1st and 2nd Order Druid members taken from each grove, something that is difficult to do since few records are kept of non-Third members. Third Order Druids only constituted (at most) 5% of all past Reformed Druid membership, but they are always the easiest to locate because of their prominence and long-term commitments to the group. It is also important to remember that only a very tiny portion of the activities or attention of most grove members were expended on issues "outside" of their groves. For most members, the local grove and the lives of its own members were all that really mattered and thus documentation of the opinions of non-Thirds on external issues is almost non-existent.

Difficulties of recent history for me:

Because I have never academically studied post-1950 history, which often falls under "politics", I have adopted some of the research tools of a journalist because I see them as the most ingenious historians of very recent events. Almost all of the major figures in Reformed Druidism are still alive at the time of this writing (1996), but they are still so active in careers that memoirs are not likely to be on their agendas for some years to come, until the retirement. And few people write memoirs, actually. Nor could I use existing research on the RDNA, since most of the other researchers didn't interview many Druids, or probably met with only one Druid. Therefore, I have discarded their work and pursued a very active search and questioning of past and present members, which I recommend unto you. This new research has included a great number of interviews, surveys and document collection from past and present members rather than relying upon poorly researched and published studies.¹⁴

Interviewing

I must tell researchers how important one's choice of relevant resources is when studying "Neo-Paganism," or any other small, modern, religious groups. Because of the richer amounts of material that are often available on recent historical events, students of recent history sometimes have the joy and burden of having too many resources. This problem of apparent "chaos" can be offset by the fact that many of the principal "movers-and-shakers" of recent events in Neo-Paganism are still alive. Interviewing them allows you to supplement contemporary records with the often '20/20' vision of hindsight and maturation. These "live witnesses" can decipher mysteries found in the available texts or make up for the paucity of documentation. Those interviews can often reduce the extraneous background reading needed by the researcher by the interviewees' indications of which aspects of a group were relatively unaffected by contemporary events. Much of what happens in a grove will never be put down by a pen. Mood and environment are difficult to capture in words, especially written words, but are retained in oral stories.

But we will always face the problem that some people are often too close to an event to step back and give us a un-biased interpretation of that situation. To correct the lies, errors, the

"purposeful exclusion of pertinent facts" by certain people and to arrive at a more insightful interpretation of past events, one must cross-check their testimonies with those of others (especially their enemies). Fortunately, much of the stressful RDNA history has occurred over 20 years ago and the Druids are becoming to open up about distressing issues as they distance themselves from them.

Background Reading

Ideally, the researcher of Neo-Paganism should explore the major interests of the people that they are studying, before they begin to study the people directly. It greatly helps when studying "Neo-Pagan" groups to have already acquired a broad background with folk-lore/music/dance (regardless of country), mythology, non-Christian religions and pertinent foreign languages. Such studies limber the mind for exploring new modes of thought, modes which may seem hardly comprehensible to the average Western-trained mind. Many Neo-Pagans are very intelligent, well-read, eclectic and scholastically inclined.¹⁵ If you approach their "official" published materials with little knowledge of the foundational culture and *mentality* among Neo-Pagan social circles, you are very likely to be overwhelmed or (worse) distracted by the sheer diversity of topics that are being bandied about. I recommend at least a full one or two year's close interaction with a Neo-Pagan group before claiming to competently understand it.

For example, I already possessed certain knowledge and experiences which greatly helped to research American Druidisms and to study Celtic Neo-Paganism, such as:

1. A great deal of familiarity with the many reputable (and disreputable) published studies on Ancient Druidism and Celtic Religions. I also have done a great deal of reading of the published materials of modern Druid movements; both those descending from and those independent of RDNA origins. I therefore can better discern which customs and aspects adopted by modern Druid groups are historically valid and which are actually adaptations from newer, more modern sources of inspiration.

2. An understanding of the basics of a few Asian religions, which is particularly crucial to understanding the origins of Carleton Druids of the RDNA. Any understanding of 60/70s mysticism must include a study of the growing interest in Asian religions.

3. I can read the Scots-Gaelic, French and German languages; all important for studying Ancient Druidism and understanding the academic studies, deities and terms referred to by Neo-Pagans/Wiccans; who are reconstructing old religions of Indo-European origin. Another useful language would have been Welsh or Irish Gaelic.

4. A five year background in observing the rites, interactions, world-views and morals of Wiccans, RDNA Druids, non-RDNA Druids, other Neo-Pagan groups and some rather unusually "liberal" Christian groups.¹⁶

5. I am also familiar with the customs, terminology and activities of people belonging to the folklore/music/dance groups, Sci-Fi clubs, Society for Creative Anachronism¹⁷ and role-playing groups. These groups are considered, by many, to be four of the primary organizations (plus the Occult arts) that are very compatible with Neo-Pagan views.

6. Also of great help, of course, was my position as the ArchDruid of a very well known Druid organization. Titles will still open doors in this world, but only knowledge, patience, and personality will keep those doors open. Honesty and respect go a long way when interviewing Neo-Pagans. Most Neo-Pagans will not respond well, if they believe you are a closed-minded

Fundamentalist or if you are mocking/belittling their beliefs. Gods help your research project if you should try to "convert" them!

New Resources on RDNA

(Casual readers are encouraged to skip this and continue to Chapter Two)

As stated before, most of the documentation available for this Epistle has been un-accessible, ignored, unknown or misused by previous researchers. As the list of the International Druid Archives shows,¹⁸ there are many types of materials now available. For the instruction of the outsider who will be confused by constant references to strange books in the footnotes, I will describe the dis/advantages and characteristics of the various categories of resources that were of primary use in this paper.

Inspirational Collections

In addition to the aforementioned *Druid Chronicles (Evolved)*, I have used other unofficial collections to provide a Carleton perspective. *The Druid Chronicles (Reformed)*, a.k.a. DC(R), was first published in 1964 and it is David Frangquist's¹⁹ description of the first year of Reformed Druidism. DC(R) contains the accumulated laws, customs, the basis of liturgy, several meditations, and valuable suggestions for organizing the RDNA groves. While much of the *Black Book of Liturgy*,²⁰ *Druid Chronicles (Reformed)* and the *Carleton Apocrypha*²¹ are found in Isaac's compendium, not so with the *Green Book of Meditations*. The Green Book is an optional resource for lazy Arch-Druids to draw Druidic meditations from the many religions in the world. All these sources are merely an alternative resource available for inspiration and story telling. They should not be seen as representing every Druid's viewpoint or personal theology. All of these publications are reprinted in "A Reformed Druid Anthology," often in a their original verbatim format with extensive historiography. Numerous issues of the *Druid Chronicler*, *Pentalpha Journal* and the *Druid Missal-Any* have given me a greater depth of understanding of the NRDNA breadth of interests and plurality of actors.

Non-Intramural Letters

These are letters that Reformed Druids have written to newspapers, various institutions, government agencies and encyclopedia researchers. They tend to fall into two main camps: clever evasions and careful attempts to convey the "joke."

When vitally necessary, many Reformed Druids would be willing to use their resemblance to a conventional religion to fool and thwart authorities; especially those authorities who have made the false assumption that **they can** actually define what is a religion. When writing to newspapers (after 1964) and magazines, the Reformed Druids try to share the basic joke and the protest that lies at its core in order that prospective members would join in the correct spirit of introspection instead of blind devotion to a set of principles or a *group*.

These letters provide a valuable insight into how contemporary "outsiders" viewed the Druids, depending on the year and location in the US. Common mis-conceptions of contemporaries about "Druidism" are conveniently expressed.

February 1993 Questionnaires²²

As discussed earlier, the responses from 23+ past Carleton members of the years 1963-1986 provided me with a view of how many non-priest druids felt about the Druids and also gave me some Carleton grove statistics. The long years appear to have led

most Druids to discard the unimportant trappings of Reformed Druidism, i.e. ritual, leaving the essential freedom of everyone to their own religious belief at the core of their Druidism. Most importantly, it also gave me the opportunity to make contact with rich sources of information.

Oral History Tapes²³

Unexpectedly, this has turned out to be the greatest research tool. As stated before, the researcher gains the apparently 20/20 hindsight to supplement the contemporary documents of the past. These oral discussions have fleshed out the history of RDNA, NRDNA, SDNA (and ADF) groups that possessed only a skeletal description when viewed from written documents. Some of the tapes were recorded by Carleton's Oral History project, but most were done by myself with the questions oriented towards writing this Epistle.

These interviews are especially valuable for understanding the infighting and troubles of the NRDNA and SDNA which, up to now, have often only been alluded to in materials relying on Isaac's writings. Interesting to this study is the lack of concern that is orally expressed by most of these people towards the politics that seemed to dominate the collection of **written** documents, although they are often the very people who wrote the documents. There is a tendency among researchers to assume that any written document, in the absence of other background material, automatically contains the most important issues of the day. Sometimes it is only the minutiae and trivia, because they are so difficult to remember, that gets written down rather than the events everybody vividly remembers and treasures. Any future *local* grove histories except Carleton and Berkeley and Live Oak, will probably have to rely exclusively on oral interviews.

Internal Correspondence (Int. Corr.)²⁴

This category was previously known as the "Records of the Council of Dalon ap Landu," which was appropriate, but it now includes all unofficial correspondence between Reformed Druid members (whether priests or not). This collection consists of a sizable portion of the networking that went on between the priests and arch-druids, with a current quantitative bias of authors coming from Carleton students/alumni.²⁵ An early voting tradition arose that any attempt to impose a new doctrine upon the entire Reformed Druids must get a consensus of acquiescence of all returned replies that had been sent out to **all the known** Reformed Druids priests on this Council. But since most of the Carleton priests didn't want Reformed Druidism to get too complicated, and this was always a sizable (if not dominant) block of Council members, correspondence ended up being primarily a vehicle for debating and exchanging gossip, not deciding on new laws. The Council also became a means to frustrate anyone from seriously considering that they had finally figured out how to "save" Druidism from itself. Many of the most influential letters have been added to the Apocrypha over the years.

The private internal correspondence also shows the elaborate and humorous back-stage preparations for devising a public front of being a "real, organized religion" when faced against oppressive institutions; such as Carleton College, the Draft Boards (and Isaac Bonewits to some extent).

One of the curious notes about Internal Correspondence (and the oral interviews) is that of Isaac (nearly) alone writing to the "Carleton Faction" until 1978. The "Carleton Faction" wrote to many members of the vague "Isaac" and NRDNA factions, asking them not to exclude non-Pagans. However, we only hear replies from one or two NRDNA members in response, besides Isaac. Besides Isaac Bonewits and Larson and Sherbak, we have

no written documents from other NRDNA members writing to RDNA members until 1979. Larson, himself, usually only steps in to soften and correct some of Isaac's letters to the RDNA. Otherwise we have only silence from all the "Neo-Pagan" Reformed Druid priests in the NRDNA on all these debates. This silence could indicate two likely conclusions:

1. The other Reformed Druids, not from Carleton, only wrote or talked amongst themselves on Isaac's "reforms."

and/or

2. Isaac (and occasionally Larson) was the only one, at that time, who really wanted to push the issues.

It is possible that the more extended periods of grove membership in the NRDNA groves allowed deeper discussions of issues exclusively by oral communication. However, except for Larson and Sherbak, no other communications are on record from the "NRDNA" and SDNA to the "RDNA" members until 1979, long after any reputed splits would have taken place. Surely if the NRDNA and SDNA (besides Isaac) were litigious for official reform, more of them would have written to Carleton alumni?

Resources On Carleton College²⁶

A good study of the "Carleton Experience" will aid in the study of Carleton Druidism, which is inseparable for many Druids. The Carleton College Archivist has shown me the best selections now available in the very valuable "Oral History Project." I have relied upon the Oral Histories of administrators, faculty and (Druid and non-Druid) students from the 60s and 70s to synthesize a view of the many factors influencing Carleton's internal environment (and therefore the Druids).

Resources on Berkeley²⁷

Berkeley Druids and Druids from the Bay-Area were the backbone of the NRDNA movement, and therefore an understanding of Berkeley atmosphere is necessary to contrast with Carleton. Any research on the NRDNA should include some study of not only the history of the University at Berkeley, but it should also include a study of the "Berkeley Community." As I mentioned before, I knew nothing of the Sixties before starting this research and I still know but a little. I have relied on the general overviews of Berkeley provided in the excellent books and videos mentioned in the bibliography. Researchers should pay special attention to *Experimentation in American Religion*, because it provides valuable statistics on the religious scene in Berkeley in 1970; which would be useful for further studies. Interviews with Berkeleyites and the NRDNA are supplementary and provide first-hand accounts.

Resources on Neo-Paganism

Of course, the best book to start with is Margot Adler's *Drawing Down the Moon*. The book is a result of the skills of Adler's long journalistic career being applied towards the study of Neo-Paganism/Wicca, an area she knows intimately. It is by far the most liked and comprehensive survey of the Neo-Pagan and Wiccan movements in America. It is invaluable in its detailed study of many forms of Neo-Paganism and its provision of contact addresses and resources for the scholar. Most people usually regard Gardner (founder of Modern Wicca), Margaret Murray and Starhawk as prominent writers in the field at the beginning, but there are lot more modern authors out there. Each offers a different view that is valuable, but scholarly works are

rare and often denigrated by academics. Future scholars should note that I lack familiarity with the subjects of astrology, kaballa, ceremonial magick and deep theological works by Neo-Pagans and Wiccans. I have relied on personal observation and conversations, Isaac Bonewit's letters and *Drawing Down the Moon* for most of my understanding of Neo-Paganism and Wicca

As I mentioned, there are an increasing number of encyclopedias in the reference section of libraries that deal with Occultism and Neo-Paganism/Wicca.²⁸ Magazines and newsletters, although the best sources of information, are not so difficult to obtain anymore, even if you're not already in such circles. I recommend going to a Sci-Fi convention or spirituality lecture series in order to start finding these periodicals and then order back issues.



Figure 5 "How many Druids does it takes to start a fire?"



Figure 6 An Irish bard and harper, 13th Cent.

Chapter Two:

Reform Druidism

1963 to 1973

Carleton's Golden Age



I would like to begin this paper with an appropriately Zen-ish koan (an especially ancient one that I just made up) to reflect the unusual mentality of the early Founders of Reformed Druidism at Carleton College.

The Three Water Bowls

A Druid and his disciple, Baka, were strolling in the garden on a very hot day and Master Druid decided to test his pupil's wisdom. It was a warm Thursday before lunch.

Druid: You!, imagine that you are terribly thirsty and that resting before you are three clear glass bowls filled with red, blue and green colored water. Each bowl is three inches deep, with a wooden base of identical design. Now, imagine that I ask you to tell me what colors are the bowls are in front of you? What would you do?

Baka: I would say; "Red, blue and green, Master."

Druid: The bowls themselves are clear and without colour! But that was the first of your errors.

Baka: Sorry, master. I would say "Clear," then.

Druid: Secondly, you should have just drank from one of the bowls, because water is good for you when you are thirsty and yet you are still worried about the colour of the bowls.

Baka: Sorry, master. Forgive me.

Druid: Your greatest mistake was to think you had to apologize to me because you feared that I wouldn't teach you again! Begone from my presence forever!

(And Baka was suddenly enlightened.)

Baka: Thank you...{pauses and bows} Master.

Druid: Hmph! Eat your rice, you're hungry too.

Interpreting the Koan

The true debates that raged in the 1970s within Reformed Druidism, as alluded in the Zen analogy, are not to be found in examining the imperfect superficial definitions that have been used to separate the Reformed Druids of North America (red-bowl), the New RDNA (blue-bowl) and Schismatic Druids of North America (green-bowl) from each other. Nor is it the point of this Epistle to judge which of these branches is the "most true" form of Druidism; I really couldn't care less. As each of the bowls had equally good water in them, I find that it was unimportant to defend the choice of one color of water over the other. The debate, as I see it, was how to satisfy one's basic needs for religion (i.e. "thirst for water") without worrying about pointless, extraneous details like dogma (i.e. "color"), or how the surrounding institutions (i.e. "Druid ") would react to your choice.

I will not try to prove that an actual transformation occurred **from** a philosophical RDNA (as represented primarily by Carleton) **into** a religion known as the NRDNA. For that, we must take each Druid's own personal definition of their own Reformed Druidism as the most valid litmus test and relinquish our desire to perfectly pigeon-hole their individual beliefs based on the group labels: RDNA, NRDNA and SDNA. Quite a number of Druids were and still are straddling the fuzzy technical borders between "religion" and/or "philosophy" by modern definitions. Many have occasionally chosen either definition for various purposes and then gone back to straddling the fence or even started building a new fence. Instead, I declare these terms to be an unwelcome distraction from other more hidden, but very important, debates that were important to Reformed Druidism as a whole.

The Four "Essential" Debates

These debates, *as I like to see them*, are: >ahem<

1. What are the basic needs that a religion **alone** can fulfill, and how can Nature help?

2. How and who can tell when it is truly appropriate to propose and/or ratify an adoption of dogma in response to a perceived need? Druidism wishes no extraneous permanent accretions²⁹ or unnecessary leaders upon itself whenever something **else** can be temporarily utilized instead.

3. How many obstacles should be placed in the path of proposals in order to allow suitable time to consider the issues and to prevent adaptations that may lead to an unstoppable process of "complications;" ones which will alienate the first two goals (and possibly exclude most of the earlier members)?

And most importantly...

4. Do the first three points really matter to us? Isn't the organizational aspect of Reformed Druidism all just a silly joke? Why bother arguing? Why not go out and just follow what you know to be true!?

Early "Carleton" Influences

I believe it is best to continue Chapter Two of this paper by an original exploration of the "why, who, what, when and where" origins for the underlying structure and faith of Reformed Druidism. In the period 1963-1966, the basic philosophical and organizational foundations were formulated and established in the forms they would mostly bear unto this very day. Unfortunately (as some Founders saw it) this was also the time when potential defects, faults, Celtic trappings and "Fisher-isms" were adopted. From 1966-1973 many of the issues of expansion and stability that Isaac brought up in 1974 would seem to have already been brought up and tacitly decided (or apathetically ignored) upon by

members of the Carleton Faction. Since Carleton students and graduates composed the vast majority of the members, priests and ArchDruids within Reformed Druidism up until the late 70s,³⁰ it is pertinent to understand the strong role that the "Carleton Experience" had in establishing, modifying, maintaining and undermining the foundations of Reformed Druidism.

Blame it on the 60s

Reformed Druidism is an offspring of the era known as the Sixties, an era which lasted from roughly 1960 to the end of America's involvement in Vietnam in 1973. The 60's, as most people remember (or have heard), were a tense time during which the preceding twenty years of seeming national unity and homogeneity was increasingly coming to doubt and reappraisal. Big issues at colleges were primarily *In Loco Parentis*³¹, Civil Rights, the Draft, American foreign policy and the beginnings of the women's rights movement.³²

The "G.I. Bill" had led to an unprecedented flood of students into colleges during the 40s/50s, which had in turn led to an expansion of faculty size.³³ With this increased college population came a greater interest in a broader "liberal arts" education. Departments like religion, philosophy and English ballooned in comparison to old standbys such as science and economics. These disciplines, by their inherent skepticism about the certainty of cultural concepts, allowed greater numbers of students to see college as a way to continue to explore new ideas amongst relatively supportive age-peers during this period of their lives, rather than being amalgamated into an older society at the age of 18. College administrators, however, were often seen as repressive tools of the Military complex during this period, both by students and many of these newer faculty members.³⁴

Carleton appears to have had a somewhat "softer" passage through the 60's than most of the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM), and far smoother than the big universities which were more tightly tied in with the Military Complex such as Berkeley, U of Michigan, Penn State or State University of New York at Buffalo (SUNY Buffalo) as described in Heineman's book, *Campus Wars*. Heineman's book is very valuable in showing that student protest movements and SDS groups, tempered by the Civil Rights movements, preceded and were mostly independent of Berkeley's Free Speech Movement which had captured the Media's attention (and therefore the attention of historians).

Carleton was blessed by its quiet rural location, small size, lack of governmental research and a long history of broad liberal arts education. But by far, it appears to have been blessed by having relatively "liberal" administrators during the 60's, in particular President Nason (1962-1970), Chaplain David Maitland (1958-1986) and religion Professor Bardwell Smith (1962-1995). Each of these men contributed or exemplified crucial elements, in my opinion, of the Carleton atmosphere that permitted Reformed Druidism to flourish in its peculiar way at Carleton.

John Nason (President 1962-1970)³⁵

When the late President Larry Gould (1945-1962) foresaw the upcoming turmoil that was beginning to simmer in the country and its colleges, he wisely judged that it was unsuitable for him to continue his benevolent "patriarchy" of administration and retired. President Nason was the first Carleton graduate, class of '27, to become president of the college, thus perhaps giving him a closer feel for the Carleton "mystique." Nason saw a need to get faculty and students more involved with the administration of the college, rather than to "repel boarders at all costs." He himself, with the approval of the Trustees, had already tacitly decided that the *In*

Loco Parentis rules were outdated and he often was a step or two ahead of the student demands.

An important result of this was a development of a Carleton tradition of a more civil and polite (but mockingly "good humor") methods of protest among students and faculty that actually led to some tangible results. Though hang-ups occurred, they were overcome by long discussion where both sides listened and learned. Nason's presidency was an orderly dismantling of some of the "Top-down" imperial policy of his predecessors.

David Maitland (Chaplain 1958-86)³⁶

The office of the chaplain at Carleton was initiated by President Larry Gould as a separate institution because Gould was the first president of Carleton who was not an ordained minister. Feeling that religion was important, Gould gave the administration of religious needs of Carleton students to the Chaplain, of which Maitland was the third and longest serving.

As I've discovered, the dismantling of the religion requirement was in many ways aided by Maitland's background. Maitland was against **forcing** anyone to believe, and he himself helped in the dismantling of the mandatory Chapel attendance. Maitland, like his gifted successor Jewell Davis, was concerned in expanding and diversifying the nascent religion department of Carleton because understanding a "foreigner's" religion made them seem less foreign. In particular, Maitland supported the expansion of teaching about Asian religions in Carleton.

Professor Bardwell Smith (1962-95)³⁷

Bardwell Smith, and other professors like Eleanor Zelliott, brought a much richer understanding of non-Western religions and cultures (especially the Asian faiths) to Carleton. Having witnessed racism and the patronizing attitude toward Asian religion and culture from his fellow marines while serving in Korea, Smith was always cognizant of how education must one day overcome prejudice. Carleton already had already developed many ties with colleges in Japan and India by the time Smith arrived. What Smith and his confederates did was to make Asia a greater focus-specialty at Carleton and bring the humanity and thoughts of Asia back home to the campus. Smith's deep empathy and knowledge of Hindu, Taoist and Buddhist cultures was important as a Dean of College (and as a long-time Druid advisor) during 1968-71 when students and faculty began to hotly protest the Vietnam war.

In comes the RDNA

With that background in mind, let us re-examine the mythical origins of the RDNA. The RDNA began in April 1963 when a group of students closely examined this age-old statement from Carleton College:

"Attendance is required at the College Service of Worship *or* of the Sunday Evening Program *or* at any regularly organized service of public worship. Each term, every student must attend seven [of ten] of the services or religious meetings."³⁸ [emphasis theirs]

A goodly number of Carleton students felt that a wasteful amount of time was being spent by religious and secular authorities to keep people "in line" and to keep them from thinking. This was seen as a hindrance to their personal growth. This activity by authority figures is often called the "Fossilization Theory," and the fear of it proves to be the greatest motivator for the RDNA:

"Reformed Druidism is a statement that religion has a tendency to become organized religion and which then becomes organization devoid of religion."³⁹

So it came to pass, that in April 1963 the "Triumvirate" (David Fisher, Howard Cherniack and Norman Nelson) were seeking a group-name for an unusual ploy for protesting the compulsory attendance of Chapel services. They intended to test the leniency of the exemption to the Chapel Attendance that Carleton allowed for those students who attended *regular* services of one's own religion. The Triumvirate wanted to test this by making an outrageously "un-orthodox" group, holding regular services and claiming that it filled the implied requirement as stated in the Handbook: i.e. *regular attendance*. Cherniack, a prominent protester at Carleton⁴⁰, commented to the Triumvirate that his parents did not like filling in government forms that they were Jewish, so they had the custom of putting down "Druid" instead.⁴¹ The Triumvirate liked the name, because it was both exotic sounding, and linked to a historical religion concerned about Nature, and one that had opposed a powerful centralized power (Rome). Because none of them knew much more on Druids⁴² and thus feared being discredited, the name "Reformed" was likely immediately adopted in order that they could claim to have dropped any historical practice that was brought up by opponents which they had forgotten to incorporate, or with which they might disagree.⁴³ The term "North America," was likely picked since there were a few Canadians in the group.

Weekly rituals were dutifully held on Saturday afternoons in the Arboretum from May 1963 to June 1964 with most members coming from KARL radio workers, theater, computer and folk dance enthusiasts. It was a group of friends meeting outdoors and having a good time together while meditating on religion. The men received a cold shoulder from the Dean when they turned in their attendance slips (saying they had attended RDNA services) while the women's attendance slips were accepted due to a loophole in their collection system.⁴⁴ Strangely, neither group received any disciplinary punishment, so their ploy was working. However, they also went to Chapel service or other religious services to cover their options just in case their RDNA applications failed.⁴⁵ When the requirement was rescinded, and the immediate purpose of the rebellion was over, the RDNA mysteriously continued.

Its Temporary Nature

There appears to be a common assumption among some historians that those organizations that outlast competitors had better-laid foundations and more careful planning. I know that Chaos often rules far more influentially than Order in these matters. Fisher, Cherniack and Nelson (and contemporaries) have always maintained:

"It was NEVER our intention to "start a religion;" I don't think any of us expected it to outlive our time or life at Carleton, especially after the religious requirement was dropped in 1964."⁴⁶

And had not the RDNA hit some powerful chord of possible validity as quickly as it did, Reformed Druidism probably would have ended in summer 1964 when President John Nason sent out a letter abolishing the Chapel Requirement.⁴⁷ Important to realize here is that the rescission of the Chapel Requirement **may** have been more likely a result of other more formal protests and administrative initiatives rather than the results of the Druids (who were mostly ignored), but they took the credit anyway.⁴⁸ During the first years, the RDNA was a shadowy group; a group

that most people thought didn't exist in reality. Many Founders⁴⁹ still have a hard time convincing their classmates that the RDNA actually existed in reality.

There were several important reasons that kept the RDNA members from dissolving the RDNA, reasons far more complicated than a simple fascination with ritualism or "Paganism" or any other such pat answers. For a great many Druids, the RDNA had introduced the possibility of taking personal responsibility for understanding and believing one's own faith. The RDNA had also shown them (in an experiential way) the benefits of learning from people from other faiths in a non-hostile forum of interaction. For many it was:

"A period of being together as a group and being quiet together. Doing whatever happens during that period. People liked that, enjoyed it. They found it refreshing, something they valued. I saw, when I became ArchDruid, a goal of introducing people to the riches of other religions."⁵⁰

Some reference materials will have you believe that Reformed Druidism radically changed or replaced the beliefs of the early members. For some, this proved true, but it is hardly satisfying as a general statement. It should be remembered that College is a time when many young adults change their religion, regardless of whether they belonged to a group such as the RDNA. A number of Carleton Druids later would become Unitarians or changed denominations, but several remained in their previous faith, albeit with a new perspective.⁵¹ When we reach the Berkeley period, that will be an entirely different issue.

Limited Celtic Influence

Indeed, one of the greatest hindrance to the entire study of Reformed Druidism; the name "Druid." Many scholars will see the word "Druidism" on a sheet of paper and suddenly a myriad of assumptions will strangle their minds.⁵² Such assumptions about "Druids" conjure up visions of the prominent use of Celtic languages and culture, human sacrifices, visiting Stonehenge every summer, being fiercely patriarchal, transmigration of the soul, Atlantis, people lying in dark rooms with rocks on their bellies, long beards and other silly stuff. It is true that the origin of the **names** of the RDNA's organizational structures, its god/archetypes and the titles of some of its officers⁵³ come from Celtic sources, but there is very little that is definitively Celtic about the **substance** of the early RDNA at Carleton, except it's penchant for chaos and entropy. If the Founders had wished to reconstruct a tightly-knit polytheism or to build an intricate system they probably would have chosen to emulate a Nordic Pagan religion or a Classical Pagan tradition, because there was far more material available to them in the libraries of Northfield than on Celtic traditions. The Celtic origin was probably deliberately chosen **because** of the vague scholarly information that was then available on Druids in 1963.⁵⁴ Because they were looking for a model that was relatively empty of restrictions, the early members felt no compunction about diverging from the historical authenticity of the Celts at a moment's notice. If you wish, they commandeered the name and image for their own purposes.

A fateful decision to follow their own pathway, whether or not it fell in line with Celtic customs, occurred early on in May 1963 during a stirring debate that almost led to a schism. The Druids were preparing to consecrate their second stone altar⁵⁵, when the question of what object to sacrifice came up for debate. While many past⁵⁶ and current religions⁵⁷ had/have an animal die during a religious activity, or in feasts leading up to events,

Western civilization now generally frowns upon animal or human sacrifice, preferring to practice impersonal slaughter by machines at distant abattoirs.⁵⁸ One faction, led by Jan Johnson, declared (perhaps a little facetiously) that an animal sacrifice was necessary because:

"Have you not forgotten the customs of old, which were the customs of our predecessors before us? Verily, I say unto you, nothing will be acceptable to the Earth-Mother save it were nothing smaller than an animal or fowl, yea, even a chicken."⁵⁹

However, Howard Cherniack (a Founder) did counter with:

"Have ye not forgotten that we are reformed, yea, even do we call ourselves by the name of Reformed, wherefore we must put behind those things which do bring offense to our senses."⁶⁰

The debate was resolved by Jan Johnson relenting his position to avoid Schism during their tender time of foundation. This is the first of the two major schism attempts within Reformed Druidism. Thus the early schism debate was waged over whether to have an animal sacrifice *like the ancient Celts*. The resulting decision not to have animal/blood sacrifice, albeit argued in a light manner, set an early precedent for ignoring scholarship on issues in variance with the members' needs or tastes.⁶¹ Since that time the Reformed Druids and all Modern American Druids have only performed vegetable sacrifices or offerings of tree leaves. This was also a precedent for a renunciation of *slavish* subservience by Reformed Druidism to any surviving remnants of lore left by the ancient Druids of the past.

10: Do you teach the ways of the Ancient Druids? If so, it is good.

11: For they had their wisdom, and that is oft forgot. But verily I say unto you: in their day, even they also were young in their traditions.⁶²

There was at least one hard-core Celtic Enthusiast in the original group, Robert Larson, whose importance in the whole of the Reformed Druid movement would come up again much later on in the history. So whereas, the ancient Druids may have been students of Nature, the orientation of the Reformed Druids towards Nature and Brotherhood may have been more a result of influences that were not Celtic. In fact there was, of all things, a demonstrably strong bias towards Far-Eastern Asian religions, Liberal Christianity and Fraternalistic ideals.

The Asian Influences

It may sound rather strange to the reader, but nearly every newspaper article with a first hand *observation* of a grove service led by a Carleton student or alumni, while mentioning the "Celtic" structures, says that the RDNA's services drew mostly upon Hinduism, Buddhism and Liberal Christian thought.⁶³ One reason for this, as I've stated, is the remarkable availability of coursework on Asian religions, languages and overseas studies in Asia provided by Carleton College during the Founding Years. But more importantly, it was the "weird," living perspectives of Asian religions in regards to authority and learning which were far more attractive to young students than the prospect of scouring dusty old books to dig up scraps of old Celtic customs. Certainly, Asia was of great interest in the world news of that era.

This Asian preference is especially seen in the Carleton RDNA's fond love of Zen Buddhism and Taoism with their *seemingly* anarchic attitude that defies the need for defining itself or relying upon the aid of "authorities":

Question: What is Zen?

Answer: Try if you wish. But Zen comes of itself. True Zen shows in everyday living, consciousness in action. More than any limited awareness, it opens every inner door to our infinite nature.

Instantly mind frees. How it frees! False Zen wracks brains as a fiction concocted by priests and salesmen to peddle their own wares.

Look at it this way, inside-out and outside-in: consciousness everywhere, inclusive, through you. Then you can't help living humbly, in wonder.⁶⁴

A brief thumbing through the pages of the Book of Meditations in *the Druid Chronicles*, "*The Green Book*" or the *Carleton Apocrypha*⁶⁵ will reveal a close similarity with a book of Koans (Zen Buddhist paradoxical statements) and Taoist anecdotes. This is not "koan-cidental" because many of the initial RDNA Druids had been greatly influenced by courses taught in or about India or Japan, both of which were countries where valuable ideas from outsiders' religions had been incorporated or absorbed into the previous belief systems.⁶⁶ This idea of "interactive and overlapping" religions versus "combative" religion especially impressed the Frangquists⁶⁷ during their trip to Japan:

"[From] When I [Fisher] had last seen you [Frangquist], your Druidism has begun to take on a definite Zen Slant, just as mine showing over from Hindus and Christianity."⁶⁸

Take this excerpt by Frangquist, which is very Zen-ish in style:

Chapter the Tenth:

1. And when they come unto you and say: "And what, then, is the nature of this thing which ye do call Awareness?" then shall ye give answer unto them in silence, for this is the Third Lesson.

4. But there are many, yea, it is the greater number, who, in their unawareness, are aware not even of their unawareness.

5. And they are like unto them who are blind from the day of their birth, and see not, nor know what it is to see.

6. But some there are who are aware only that they are also unaware: hallowed are they, for they are children of Be'al.⁶⁹

7. One of these is like unto one who keeps the Vigil,⁷⁰

8. for their gaze cannot pierce the mantle of darkness which is thrown over all the world about them, but they rest secure in the knowledge of the return of day.⁷¹

An interesting side note was the growing importance of Zen, Asian religions and "mystery" religions to the greater "Counter-Culture" movement of the 60s, not to mention the Beat culture of the 50s. This Asian influence greatly increased after 1965 when President Johnson repealed the 1917 Oriental Exclusion Act.⁷² Many leaders in the Eastern sects that subsequently immigrated to America were influential because the:

"60's were, after all, a period of an intense interest in mysticism and strange religions, and a period also of the rise of the counter-culture. While none of the founders, or Dave Frangquist, were then self-consciously "counter-culture," I [Fisher] think we provided those alienated by the turgidity of native Protestantism a surprising, viable alternative."⁷³

It is therefore no mere coincidence that the selections of *the "Green Book of Meditations"* come predominantly from Eastern religions.⁷⁴ Shelton, whose "influence on Carleton Druidism was significant long after his graduation"⁷⁵, was particularly insistent that every succeeding ArchDruid of Carleton should have a personal copy of the Green Book. Shelton felt that; "In a real sense the Green Book was the heart of Druidism in my day (70s)," which was diversity.⁷⁶

But I should immediately state here that the Green Book also had many selections from monotheistic religions⁷⁷ and secular sources. Also important to realize is that a number of Carleton Druids would bring in meditations from Sci-Fi⁷⁸, newspapers, children's books and secular sources. Sometimes no readings were done at a ritual and the meditation was simply to quietly stare at the landscape. Also many students would seek out wisdom in their own time and way, separately from the "group."⁷⁹

Perhaps it was the prominence of the Vietnam war, more than anything else, which led to an early-times RDNA emphasis for drawing on Asian religions. Knowledge and understanding of Eastern faiths may have strengthened the resolve of Carleton students to oppose the inhumanity of the Vietnam war. Through their readings of Asian philosophy and religion, the Vietnamese, Thais, Cambodians and Chinese were no longer some godless, shadowy people who lived far away; but possessors of valid beliefs, souls and morals; although not always expressed like ours.

Another telling sign of the relative unimportance of ancient Celticity in comparison to Asian studies for the early RDNA was that after the RDNA's faculty advisor, John Messenger (an Irish paleo-archeologist), left Carleton in 1965 the RDNA was faculty-supervised by Bardwell Smith (a modern Asian religion professor and ex-Episcopal priest). If they had really wished to revive a pre-Christian religion of Europe, wouldn't they have chosen a History or Classics department professor?

Another element, which I'll bring up again in Chapter Five, is the calendar dating system of Carleton. While the RDNA acknowledges that the Celtic Year begins on Samhain (November 1st), the Druids from Carleton date the "Years of the Reform" from May 1st, 1963 (half way through the Celtic Year) instead of dating from Samhain 1962 as did the more Celtic-inspired Reformed Druids in California. This led to conflicting dating systems, but also shows that the Reformed Druids of Carleton origin were more interested in their own organizational ways, than fitting into a Celtic mode. There was some confusion by Shelton in 1969, dating from Samhain during the Codex Affair, but this was corrected in the 1976 publication of the Carleton Calendar.

Because of the variety of inspiration that existed within Reformed Druidism, some Carleton Druids (in hindsight) therefore regretted the "vivid Celtic Imagery [that] made some interaction with the growing Neo-Pagan movement inevitable."⁸⁰ I, however, don't feel that the Neo-Pagans disagreed with Reformed Druidism so much on the theological or cultural grounds, but rather on political and organizational issues, as I'll discuss later.

Fraternal Influences?

An hypothesis brought up by my research was the vague possibility of Masonic and/or Fraternal influence on the very early RDNA. It is important to state here that little or no attention has previously been spent on this idea by the members of the RDNA, partly due to the Fisher's reluctance to talk about the issue, and because very few members really consider it to be important. For them, the group started in 1963. Period. However, I feel it is necessary to address this issue because of the recent renaissance of modern Druid groups in Europe and America, whose origins came from fraternal organizations. Out of academic honesty, scholars using the International Druid Archives at Carleton should be aware of any uncertainties pertaining to the independent origins of the RDNA and the American Druid Movement. I should however caution the reader that I am not a member of any such Fraternal/Masonic order, and that I am only relying upon common, published matter for my information.

There are some indirect evidence that may lend credence to the possibility that the RDNA maybe unwittingly an offshoot of previous Druid Masonic order, or perhaps based on a few ideals snatched from a fraternal organization.¹⁵⁰ Both groups (RDNA and Masonic Druids/Fraternal Organization/Fraternities) have some vague similarities in the areas of liturgy, calendars, costume, philosophy, drinking, and a Judeo-Christian bent. In addition to this, I believe that there were minor opportunities of access to such information by the early members of the RDNA.

Loose History of Fraternalism

For the reader who is completely unfamiliar with Fraternalism, I will share my meager outsider knowledge on the subject, although I am no expert. Modern Freemasonry is generally believed to have begun in the 17th/18th century, although they claim to go back to the Templar knights, and through other groups back to Old Testament times. Very soon after its "re-emergence" back then, Freemasonry became very popular, and the liturgy and hierarchy of Freemasonry soon became the template upon which nearly all later "secret" societies were developed, including Greek College Fraternities; which is a point that I'll bring up again. Mark Carnes explained that the peak popularity of fraternal organizations, during the 19th and early 20th century, was a result of males being dissatisfied with the rising prominence of women in molding the faith at the local parish community and at home.¹⁵¹ By the late 1950's, fraternalism was rapidly declining at colleges and communities as the generation-gap widened between the youngsters and older lodge leaders. However Fraternalism had many other attractions to the general member than just male-bonding.

The premise of Freemasonry is to preserve and disseminate (in a secret manner) a set of "ancient rituals," wisdom and knowledge of construction that were entrusted by the first builder of the Temple of Solomon, Hiram Abiff, who was murdered for keeping the secrets, to a select disciple (and down through the ages to the Freemasons). For Freemasons, God's simple message was complicated by the accretions of later Jewish generations and then by the Catholic church. The true doctrine was given to the supposed disciples of Abiff, who then supposedly founded

Freemasonry. The secrets of Freemasonry were then reportedly guarded by stonemasons and construction workers up through the fall of the Roman empire and the medieval ages until Freemasonry supposedly resurfaced in the 18th century. Other groups imitated the Freemasons and claimed the transmission of ancient knowledge, although not always of the Judeo-Christian variety; e.g. The Red Men organization in which Caucasians dressed up like Native Americans and supposedly passed on the knowledge of Native Americans.

The liturgy and hierarchy of Freemasonry is somewhat based on various Old Testament precedents, in particular with respect to the "patriarchal/male" elements; which is understandable given the male audience for which it was developed. Intrinsic to the beliefs of Freemason is the symbolic image of God as the Supreme Architect of Creation.¹⁵² Nature and Man reflect the perfect mathematical and geometrical genius of God. Through the order and chaos inherent in Nature, and of course Mankind, one could see the mind of God. While few Freemasons ran out into the woods to seek God, some did.

Some of the Nature-oriented Freemasons and Fraternally-oriented people were also familiar with the Renaissance interest in studying ancient Classical documents, some of which referred to a group of Celtic priests who didn't hold services indoors, but in wooded areas; i.e. the God in Nature element. Also in ancient Classical documents on Druids is the recurrent belief among Greeks and Romans that the Druids were the heirs of Pythagoras' philosophical beliefs (or vice-a-versa); which were derived from purity of the science of geometry.¹⁵³ Add on to this that the Druids were primarily located in Western Europe (but also on the Danube and Turkey) and were possibly the ancestors of some of the people in Britain, France, Germany and Italy; and you have race-pride thrown into the equation. During the early 1700s, William Stukeley (during one of his more addled states of mind) gave authority to the rumors that the stone circles in Europe and the British Isles were built by Celtic Priests. Nobody could understand how the megaliths were raised with simple tools, so of course some secret knowledge of architecture was required. Because the builders of the Temple of Solomon were, *of course*, the greatest architects a few Fraternalists claimed that the Druids also were the direct heirs of Freemasonic ideas and knowledge. As a result, hordes of fraternal organizations popped up calling themselves Druids. Because little to nothing was academically known about ancient Celtic religion, few academics openly doubted the groups' statements and their "ancient" documents. As a result, much confusion still exists in the public's understanding of ancient Druids. But in the 60s, the British Druids were still making headlines for showing up at Stonehenge, and thus at least the idea of a Druidic brotherhood (or siblinghood) was feasibly available for the founders of the RDNA through the media.

Fraternal Evidence

Isaac Bonewits, a liturgist and an insightful arm chair scholar of Modern British Fraternal Druidism, believes that the liturgy and core philosophy of the RDNA bears a remarkable similarity to those found in the United Ancient Order of Druids; a primarily charitable organization of a few thousand members in the US that still retains some remnants of ritual from their fraternal past. I must defer judgment to Isaac on the liturgical similarity. This is a valid possibility, because a few books of UAOD material was stocked away at the St. Olaf library, which is only a 20 minute bike ride from Carleton. Although David Fisher was headed for Episcopal Seminary, even during the founding of Reformed Druidism, it does seem unlikely that he would have ever visited St. Olaf's Library, because St. Olaf was not then of the same caliber as Carleton, as it is now approaching today. Back in the 60s, even the 70s, Olaf's academic level was looked down

upon by Carleton students, and there would have been little to induce him to have gone there. As for the belief in a universal siblinghood and pantheism; these could easily be found in the doctrines of Deism and Unitarianism and 19th century poets, which are often attributed to Druids in unacademic books and reference materials then available in the Carleton and St. Olaf libraries. It should be noted that there was also a bit of Unitarian background among some of the Founders of the RDNA before they reached Carleton.¹⁵⁴

The final answer will have to come from David Fisher, who has refused any further interviews since the early 70s. In spring of 1963, David Fisher devised the Order of Worship.¹⁵⁵ In contrast to Isaac's opinion, most Druids and non-Druids claim the liturgy bears a remarkable resemblance in form to the Episcopal rite, not surprising since David Fisher and most early leaders of Reformed Druidism were quite familiar with the Episcopal church.¹⁵⁶ For the sake of the protest and to lend an air of venerable age to the group, David Fisher is reputed by Norman Nelson as having claimed that he [David Fisher] had been initiated as a "third order Arch-Druid while in high school."¹⁵⁷ Not long after the group's purpose was completed by the repeal of the Chapel Attendance ordinance, Fisher denied his high school ordination and claimed that he had acquired the symbology through Frazer's "Golden Bough," which is also plausible. Fisher's motives for denial are slightly suspect because he feared not being admitted to Episcopal Seminary.¹⁵⁸ However, because Fisher unsuccessfully tried to start other "secret" groups before founding the RDNA while at Carleton,¹⁵⁹ one may suspect Fisher (and an undisclosed other person) as having at least some Masonic or fraternal knowledge, or at least an inclination to form a group similar to those based on Fraternal principles (even if Fisher had not been previously a member of a Fraternal group).

Other evidence of Fraternal influence are the 10 orders of the RDNA. In the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry there are 10 orders of initiation; the first three have different functional purposes within the group, but the next 7 are honorary. The RDNA has three basic orders of 1st, 2nd and 3rd, and the 4th through 10th orders are completely honorary. Each order in Freemasonry and the RDNA is accompanied by an initiation by someone of that order. Whereas in Freemasonry a ritual, a password or handshake is learned, Druidism only gives a distinctive ribbon and a ritual as a sign of office. Another interesting correlation is the title of "preceptor" for one of the three officers of a grove. "Preceptor" often appears as a title of organizational hierarchy in some Fraternal organizations, particularly Freemasonry. I believe the title could also have come from a position in the Anglican mass.

Then there is the surprising similarity of names and dates of the same eight festivals of the Reformed Druid calendar with the "8-fold wheel of the year" found in Neo-Paganism and the British Druid Fraternal system. I believe that this can easily be explained in that all three groups could have easily researched the popular literature written on Celtic customs. Beltane, Oimelc, Lughnasadh and Samhain were common Celtic festivals in the British Isles up until the 19th/20th century. So anyone spending an hour or two reading MacCulloch (1910) or Kendrick (1932) could have learned of these four great calendar festivals. As for the "cross-quarter" festivals (named so because they lie exactly half-way between the aforementioned holidays) of the solstices and equinoxes; these can be explained by the common (possibly false) assumption that the Druids or Celtic peoples had built the megalithic stone circles as observatories to measure the lunar cycles and the movements of the sun. Since many of these megalithic circles do bear some validity for judging the equinoxes and solstices, many have assumed that great Druid festivals must have occurred at these times also. While Christmas and St. John

the Baptist/Midsummer's days are carryovers into the Christian calendars, it is harder to prove the case with the equinoxes.¹⁶⁰ Since these holidays were of easily locatable knowledge, I assume that the founders of the RDNA, various British Fraternal Orders, and the Neopagan movement could have devised the same calendars by independent initiatives and a quick study in their local libraries.

The early Freemasons were notorious for their drinking habits, as are the college fraternities which are their indirect offshoots. Was the RDNA originally set up as a Fraternity? Perhaps in Fisher's mind, but hardly in the eyes of the other druids. Carleton College has a strict policy of no Greek fraternities or sororities on or off it's campus. So how about a Celtic one? Most-to-all students are very supportive of this policy, because of a tradition of openness in the entrance requirements to organizations. The Reformed Druids have always been extremely welcoming of new people, and lacks the "hazing" common to fraternities. As for the use of alcohol at rituals, it was never much more than a shot per person, except in the 2nd Order initiation where it can be as high as three shots. A few tame parties occurred after the services of the main festivals, but no more than could be expected for a general College crowd on a weekend. I doubt this is a conclusive point of evidence of a fraternal influence or fraternity influence. I'll discuss the issue later under the Pseudo-Judeo-Christian influences.

Conclusion on Fraternalism

The possibility of a Masonic connection must remain open to debate, but NONE of the Carleton Druids have ever shown much concern, credence or knowledge of a possible preceding Druid group. For them, it STARTED in 1963, irregardless of what future evidence may show to the contrary. Many of the similarities can be chalked up to similarities that exist between organizations founded for the same purposes (in this case: universal siblinghood and opposition to tyrannical organizations). IF there was any influence it soon ceased within the first months of Reformed Druidism as David Fisher's influence within the group was supplanted by the interests of the other Founders and members. If the fraternal influences existed in the earliest weeks, they were greatly overshadowed by other factors; such as the need to look like a religion to get rid of the Chapel Requirement, the prominence of the philosophies of Asia and the pseudo-Judeo-Christian influences.

Judeo-Christian Influences on Druidism

It is a pretty good bet that at least 85% of all the members of Reformed Druidism were raised in a Judeo-Christian household (or a Western Atheistic one). It is therefore not unreasonable to think that the Founders of the RDNA should have sought a little inspiration from the Bible and other Christian literature when they were devising a "religion" to spoof the Chapel Requirement. This "swiping of ideas" and lighthearted spoofing of the Judeo-Christian tradition may seem a bit blasphemous or heretical to some, but we must remember that the RDNA felt that a religion had to be able to laugh at itself.¹⁶¹ I think that the first elements to be borrowed from the Judeo-Christian tradition borrowed was the Liturgy, as written by David Fisher in the first few weeks of April or at the latest by May 1st, 1963; and upon which the apparent hierarchy of the RDNA was based.

ORDER OF COMMON WORSHIP:
SUMMER HALF OF THE YEAR
The Earliest Known Version

I. OPENING BLESSING:

O Lord, forgive these three sins that are due to our human limitations:

Thou art everywhere, but we worship you here;

Thou art without form, but we worship you in these forms;

Thou needest no praise, yet we offer thee these prayers and sacrifices;

O Lord, forgive [*these*] three sins that are due to our human limitations.

Mighty and blessed, fertile and powerful, to thee Earth-Mother, we sing our praise, asking that what we offer up to thee will be accepted, and thy blessing of life granted to us.

II. PROCESSION AND DRAWING OF THE CIRCLE (and LIGHTING OF FIRE)

III. HYMNS OR CHANTS OF PRAISE

IV. THE SACRIFICE

Our praise has mounted up on the wings of eagles, our voices have been carried to thee on the shoulders of the winds. Hear now, O our Mother, as we offer up to thee this our sacrifice of life. Accept this we pray, and grant us life.

Hast thou accepted our sacrifice, O our Mother? I call on the Spirit of the North to give answer, of the South, of the East-- and of the West.

Praise be, our sacrifice, dedicated to the fertility and renewal of life has been accepted.

V. THE ANSWER

1. Of what does the Earth-mother give that we may know the continual flow and renewal of life?

THE WATERS-OF-LIFE.

From Whence do these waters flow?

FROM THE BOSOM OF THE EARTH-MOTHER, THE NEVER CHANGING ALL-MOTHER.

And how do we honor this gift that cause life to men?

BY PARTAKING OF THE WATERS-OF-LIFE.

Has the Earth-Mother given forth of her bounty?

SHE HAS

Then give me the Waters.

2. O DALON AP LANDU, HALLOW THESE WATERS BY THE SEVENFOLD POWERS, AND BY THE THREE WAYS OF DAY AND THE ONE OF NIGHT. GIVE US TO KNOW THY POWER AS WE TAKE AND DRINK OF THY SECRET ESSENCES.

3. To thee we return this portion of thy bounty, O our Mother, even as we must return to thee.

VI. THE SERMON

VII. THE BENEDICTION

Go forth into the world of men, secure in the knowledge that our sacrifice has found acceptance in the Earth-mother's sight, that she has answered our prayer, and that you go forth with her blessing. PEACE, PEACE, PEACE.

A Crude Analysis of the Ritual¹⁶²

For many people, the words of the invocation are their fondest memory of the ritual. Primary amongst the reasons they give is that the humbling expression of how we worship is inherently inferior and flawed to the way we'd LIKE to worship; how the very framework of our mind inhibits true worship. The words "sins" were often replaced with "errors" or "limitations" in later versions.

The liturgical roles of the three officers of the grove are laid out here. The Priest has the center stage in the ritual, governing the actions and timing. But the Preceptor also has a very active role in the etching of the Druid Sigil, the fetching of the sacrifice, answering of the catechism of the waters in part V.1. (which may also be answered by the congregation), and the confirmation of the sacrifice's acceptance. The Server's role is like that of cup-bearer/acolyte and passes the waters amongst the group between V.2. and V.3., and little more. The secular role of these officers is small. Usually there was only one Priest in a grove, the Arch-Druid. The role of the Priest (or priests, if there are several in a grove at the same time) is to maintain the calendar of observance and hold weekend services (especially during the early 60s). The Preceptor is in charge of the any paperwork and gophering in the grove's activities. The Server has few secular responsibilities.

The service has a vague resemblance to the Holy Mass of the Episcopal church, but besides the consecration of an alcoholic beverage; the Order of Worship follows the generic liturgical template of the services of most religions (i.e. Greeting, Adoration, an invocation to Deity, a consecration/blessing of the community with an optional communal activity or feeding, a meditation/sermon and a parting with blessing). Strangely, any of the participants could well be interpreting the "Lord" in the beginning to be the Judeo-Christian God. However, they could also be viewing "Lord" as Krishna or Allah or the Great Spirit or Buddha or Cernunnos or "Bob" or etc. Remember that Reformed Druidism has no EXPLICIT gods in its "theology;" therefore interpretation of the terms and names is up to the individual Druid. The invocation of Dalon ap Landu and the Earth-Mother could be interpreted as however wished by the participant; either as Gods in their own right or as personifications of philosophic ideals.

Waters-of-Life¹⁶³

It is very surprising that there is no consecration of a foodstuff as a parallel to the bread in the Christian Mass. I find

the choice of whiskey, as the drink of consecration, to be a rather intriguing choice. The Irish Gaelic for "whiskey" is "uisce-beatha," or translated literally, it is "waters of life," which is well known.¹⁶⁴ Whiskey being a purely Celtic invention, it was a natural and appropriate choice as the beverage of a "Celtic Religion," like Druidism was portraying itself in the beginning.¹⁶⁵ So it would seem to have been another little Celticism of the group, yes? Possibly not. In a very popular classic Science Fiction book of the 50/early 60s, *Stranger in a Strange Land* and *Dune*, a beverage known as the "waters of life" are used to unite the people in a strange exotic religion. What is interesting to note is that *Stranger in a Strange Land* became the inspiration for a NeoPagan religion known as "The Church of All Worlds," which was started among the science-fiction loving college students in 1961 down in Missouri. Coincidence? However, few early members were known to be sci-fi fans, so it is unlikely that it was an inspiration for Fisher's RDNA.

Calendar

It should be noted that it was decided at the first Samhain ritual (Nov. 1st, 1963) that the Waters of Life would not be served from Samhain to Beltane (May 1st). It is uncertain if financial reasons were involved or Lenten concepts of periods of abstinence. Instead, the Waters of Sleep (plain water) would be served at all rituals during this period. This required a change in the Order of Worship. One reason for the change that I've come up with is that the season of winter in Minnesota is very fierce and uncompromising to outdoor Druid services from November until at least April/May; limiting outdoor services to about 6 or 7 in the fall and 7 or 8 in the spring. As a result, Saturday services would have to be held indoors during the winter, and alcohol was prohibited on the Carleton campus in the early 60s. The use of alcohol was unofficially tolerated off-campus, and the arboretum of the Druid Services was pseudo-off-campus. Thus developed the two halves of the Druid Calendar, the Summer Half from Beltane to Samhain and the Winter Half from Samhain to Beltane. Another possibility for the halves of the year is found in the Benedictine Rule of having different vigils and psalm readings between November 1st and Easter from those used between Easter and November 1st. Fisher would likely have been aware such a difference.

A comment is pertinent here about the eight celebratory festivals of the RDNA. Four of them are tied in with the agrarian/husbandry practices of pre-20th century Europe. Those are Beltane (May 1st) cattle go into the higher elevations to pasture. Next is Lughnasadh (Aug 1st) which is the celebration of the beginning of the harvest. Then comes Samhain (Nov. 1st) when cattle were slaughtered for meat over the winter and dead relatives are remembered. Finally there is Oimeic (Feb. 1st) when the ewes drop their lambs and begin to lactate. These traditional celebrations of the rhythms of Nature were seen as more important and less divisive by the RDNA than remembering the holidays from each of the many World religions.¹⁶⁷ At any rate they are more Indo-European than Celtic and were written about in books like Frazer's *Golden Bough* and MacCulloch.¹⁶⁸

The other four festivals are the equinoxes and solstices. Yule/Christmas and Midsummer have their basis in the solstices, but the equinoxes have less celebrated carryovers like Paddy's Day, Easter/Passover and Lady's Day. In fact the equinoxes were not officially celebrated by the RDNA at Carleton until the late 80s, because of the lack of 'proof' that they were Celtic, and because they are not mentioned in the *Druid Chronicles (Reformed)*. The Berkeley grove was the first Grove of the Reform to raise the equinoxes to a higher status. Regardless, equinoxes and solstices did not play an important role in the Druidism at Carleton until the late 80s. This is primarily because

they mostly fall on vacation times when Carleton Students are unable to meet.

It is interesting that Carleton's weather and academic schedule makes most of the "big eight" festivals, except Fall Equinox, Samhain and Beltane uncelebratable outdoors. The result is that the cycles of the seasons may not be as apparent and important to most of the Carleton members who are unable to participate in all 8 spokes of "The Wheel of the Year." However, as the years progressed after the Chapel Requirement was rescinded, the festivals began to take on a much greater importance than the weekend services, which were a left over from the early days. By the mid 80s, weekend services had completely dropped out of use at Carleton, replaced by lunar observances, 8 festivals and weekly tea or book club meetings. As far as I know, the weekly services are still common at some NRDNA groves.

Early Druid Literature

Seeing as how the Chapel requirement was seen as enforcing Judeo-Christianity at Carleton, it is not surprising that the Druids would poke fun at Judeo-Christianity in a few other ways: scriptures, altar building and missionary activity. In some ways I find this the most interesting part of the early Druid days. It gives me a better understanding of how easy or hard it is to imitate the progress and quarrels of the early centuries of Christianity; and thereby exposes some of our conceptions to a humorous light.

The *Druid Chronicles (Reformed)* was the 1964 summer release 1964 (written and revised from the summer of 1963 to spring 1963) of David Frangquist to leave a faithful account of the early days for Druids who weren't there in the beginning. It is an amazing work, a self-contained blueprint for Reformed Druidism as the Carleton Grove initially understood it. The *Druid Chronicles (Reformed)* may look very much like conventional biblical scriptures. It has the same verse-numbering system and mimics the now-awkward, repetitive and flowery vocabulary of the *King James Bible* of the Episcopal Church of the 1960s. It is divided into five books, perhaps like the Pentateuch of the Torah, and it has an Early Chronicles and Later Chronicles to parallel the Old and New Testaments. It is filled with tales of "great" happenings, heroic deeds and omens (although few prophecies). It has a book of Laws and a book of Customs which set forth the simple structures of Druidism, not unlike Leviticus and Deuteronomy. It also has a book of Meditations which is still referred to for inspiration by members of the present RDNA and NRDNA groves, much like the Book of Psalms. The characterization of David (a Fisher) "crying out in the wilderness," invokes a comparison with how John the Baptist foreshadowed Jesus (perhaps as David Fisher did for Frangquist?). The many reconstructions of the altar parallels the destructions of Solomon's Temple. With a bit of imagination, the words of hopeful reunion by Fisher in Early Chronicles before the summer vacation, could be paralleled with Jesus telling his disciples that they would meet again. For many, it is all they will ever need to practice Druidism, yet despite its popularity, the *Druid Chronicles (Reformed)* are not inviolable dogma to Druids like the Bible is to many Christians. Although there was an early decision not to add additional writings to the DC(R), but rather to make all further additions to an Apocrypha, this does not indicate that the DC(R) was a holy scripture. It was written with the intention of being a self-standing handy guidebook to be used, or not used. It is perfectly possible to break all the customs in DC(R), disagree with most of the suggestions, not like the meditations, and still be a Reformed Druid in good standing with the group.

Over the years a Talmud-like collection of letters, memoranda and rituals made by the Founders of Druidism and other letter-writing Druids (originally known as the Records of the Council) slowly accumulated in a large binder called the Blue Book of the Archives; which was the predecessor to the present International Druid Archives. Like the Ark of the Covenant, it wandered about from one place to another, being lost frequently. From 1964, until the publication of *the Druid Chronicles (Evolved)* by Isaac in 1976, there was some debate over whether certain letters should be added onto the original five books of the *Druid Chronicles (Reformed)* (esp. *The Book of Faith*). It was finally agreed that the *Druid Chronicles (Reformed)* should stand as an independent publication. Isaac came up with several letters that he assembled into his Book of the Apocrypha. Many within the RDNA did not like his choices, so certain special documents were extracted from the Blue Book and put into a separate production known as the Carleton Apocrypha under the aegis of Richard Shelton in the period of 1971-1976. To continue the Christian/Druid comparison, one could perhaps compare the Druid Apocryphas to the New Testament or the Lost Books of the Bible, but still with the caveat that the Apocryphas are not dogma or indicative of the whole Reform.

This tradition is roughly similar to the activity of the Early Christians writing to each other. Early debates, as already discussed, were mostly resolved by mail. Most of this is pretty obvious to the reader. Occasional encouragements to spread the "faith" of Druidism (whatever that meant?) only serve to highlight much of the tongue-in-cheek aspect that accompanied much of the growth of Druidism.

Conclusion to Judeo-Christian Influences

Judeo-Christianity, while it had some flaws for many members, was still a primary influence on the beginnings of Reformed Druidism; perhaps even greater than the Asian influences (which themselves, were definitely more influential than Celticity). And perhaps it is right that Reformed Druidism should continue to occasionally lead its members in a re-evaluation of the Western religions, for like Nature, we will forever "come face-to-face" with them. Many members would return to Western monotheistic religions after a brief bout with Druidism, often with an enhanced understanding of what it means to be religious.¹⁶⁹ Sometimes the RDNA's light-hearted spoofs of elements of Judeo-Christian religions would bring about a revelation and signal a bold exploration into new possibilities.

The Two Basic Tenets

Since the RDNA probably came from no single recognizable or known preceding institution, you may be wondering now "Just what do the Druids believe, and whence came their beliefs?"⁸¹ From the spring of 1963, the two Basic Tenets have been the **only** statement accorded complete theological agreement amongst all the Reformed Druids, both priests and lower Orders. The recruitment for Reformed Druidism was aided and guided by the very short and simple list of beliefs that were devised by Cherniack.⁸²

The object of the search for religious truth, which is a universal and never-ending search, may be found through the Earth-Mother; which is Nature; but this is one way, yea, one way among many.

And great is the importance, which is of a spiritual importance, of Nature, which is the Earth-Mother; for it is one of the objects of

Creation, and with it people do live, yea, even as they do struggle through life are they come face to face with it.⁸³

These two short paragraphs are the most recounted quotation of Reformed Druid theology and are as roughly equivalent in importance to the RDNA as the Ten Commandments are to Judeo-Christian theology and the Five Pillars are to Islam. They are the **only** beliefs that have ever been required of new members to become a valid Druid in the RDNA or NRDNA. Norman Nelson, a Founder of the RDNA, stated that they "were careful in setting forth the original Tenets, to make it clear that Druidism (at least in 'our' Reform) did not conflict with other beliefs;"⁸⁴ The Founders had in effect "formulated Druidism as a religion of the least common denominator, a faith that few could object to, and [we] were surprised when some embraced it as adequate."⁸⁵

It is important to note here that there are no explicit gods or goddesses mentioned in the Basic Tenets. The Earth-Mother is said to be Nature, but she is not **defined** as a Goddess. While the Earth-Mother would immediately be considered a Goddess by most Wiccans and Neo-Pagans who would hear this statement, here is a loop-hole for an atheist or monotheistic Reformed Druid to view the Earth-Mother as a personification of the material world, Nature. The result is that more people can agree on the same thing, while interpreting it differently. As Larry Press related to me, there are no traditional mythologies or stories attached to any of the Celtic Gods by the RDNA in their publications.⁸⁶ The god-names remained as uncarved blocks of wood to be wrought upon freshly by each member's imagination in their own way, or to be simply left as blocks.

The Founders had realized that many religions from around the world (past and present) have used analogies drawn from the material world to express Divinity; whether that Divinity is immanent or transcendent.⁸⁷ In fact, David Frangquist felt that Nature was at the root base of all religions:

"John B. Sparks has demonstrated that all of the major religions of the modern world have developed directly or indirectly from Nature worship."⁸⁸

The trick that the RDNA used was that if the same story about, say, a bird making a nest, can be interpreted by all religions as a useful analogy for their own religious beliefs, then people of all religions could benefit from getting together and hearing that same story of how a bird built its nest. ("One mouth telling a story, many ears interpreting."⁸⁹) As long as dogmatic theological statements remain out of the stories, the group can enjoy each other's company, because dogma is as often a testing-device primarily for exclusion rather, as for inclusion.

Resultant Philosophy/Theology

The combination of the Basic Tenets and a general Carleton disinclination to overradicalize on an issue, but to maintain a respectful interest or at least a concerted apathy, comes a great many unofficial practices among Carleton Druids. I remind you that former Carleton Druids were, at least nominally, the ArchDruids of almost all RDNA and early-NRDNA groves until 1976.⁹⁰ Because the first core-members of a grove are often chosen by the founding Archdruid, the background of that missionary Third Order Druid is important. Therefore this "Carleton" philosophy/religion is worth expounding further upon before mentioning the hierarchical roots of Reformed Druidism, because these views are older than the political structures themselves and should be known and understood before delving into the "Druid Politics."

Some Druids felt the greatest need for Druidism was to instruct people that they had a right to believe what they knew to be true, regardless of what others said. A person joining the RDNA and/or NRDNA was never required to renounce their previous faiths, whether mainstream or Neo-Pagan.⁹¹ It was important to Druidism that you believed your own views instead of slavishly following those of others, provided that you had carefully examined them and judged them sound:

"Their numbers are great and their voices are loud. They shall present much authority before you, and say: "We know our way to be the only way, for it is the way of our ancestors."

But take heed, lest you should fall into the trap."⁹²

A way that one could oppose such bigoted authority and still prevent one's own participation in the same blame-worthy activity ("the trap") was:

"...to be intellectually honest with himself, and not blindly bigoted, his faith must be based on a rational and prayerful consideration of the alternatives."

"We pity the man whose faith is based only on a fear of questioning that faith. For our faith is a faith freely embraced, the only kind of faith worth having."⁹³

Once that is realized as a noble goal for one's self, it should follow that an opportunity for holding one's own beliefs should also be ceded as the right to others because:

"Awareness shall come unto no one save it shall be in their own way: and it shall come unto no one save they shall come unto it.

...And make your way not after the ways of others, but after your own way:

and go too to the fountain of Awareness, which is in Nature."⁹⁴

This led to the conclusion that one could never successfully force one's own "awareness" upon another, or even reliably judge whether such a transformation had indeed occurred in someone else.⁹⁵ This probably posed a permanent perplexing paradox for proselytizing. This philosophy/religious precept of firmness in one's own beliefs and respectful uncertainty over the validity of another's beliefs underlies all the future debates in Reformed Druidism. How this relates to relativism, is another issue for the scholars. Above all, the Druid should remember that in all the religions outside our own: "There were treasures there that related to our tradition as Druids of looking to Nature."⁹⁶

Early on, some Druids had tentatively replied to the first of the four essential debates in Druidism: "What are the basic needs for religion?" One apparent answer, one among many, was that religion (and Reformed Druidism) should encourage and support people to continue questioning and searching for religious truth, but religions should not limit the searcher.

"If I were ever to pass on any advice to my successors, it would be to never consider that they have found, as Druids, the ultimate answer to any of their questions. Druidism is a faith, if a faith, in questioning, not in answering. Awareness, to a Druid, is an

individual thing, to be shared, perhaps, but never to be codified."⁹⁷

"[I] saw it [Reformed Druidism] as a slightly more organized way of pursuing moral, ethical (+later) spiritual issues from new perspectives."⁹⁸

"It also reinforced my own conviction in the universality of core religious beliefs which lie beneath the varying disguises of various religions."⁹⁹

As for the 4th "Essential" Debate, that Druidism shouldn't get too serious about itself, lest it succumb to the "Fossilization Theory." For once a group can't laugh at itself then the organization has stifled a possible expression of religiosity:

"[T]he strength of Druidism lies in its rejection of the orthodox, a quality which often leads to humorous results.

Without ever being too sure of ourselves, we must provide an opportunity for introspection, in a religious setting, but a setting in which the participant will not feel constrained by the old conventions with which he was formally familiar."⁴⁴

Organizational Roots of the RDNA

The basic beginning of group-structure was devised by David Fisher, because he set up the original liturgy. A more detailed analysis of the ritual is discussed in Chapter Four, but the basic important issue was that three liturgical roles were required to "officially" perform the Order of Worship. The three liturgical roles included 1) an "Arch-druid" chanting the week-end service liturgy, later known as "The Order of (common) Worship," 2) a "Preceptor" who answered to a formulaic set of questions asked by the Arch-Druid before consecrating the "Waters-Of-Life"¹⁰⁰ and 3) a "Server" who carried the cup of the Waters-of-Life around to all the Druids.¹⁰¹ There was no initial imposition of hierarchy of orders (except in Fisher's mind) at the first service, so anybody could have technically filled each role, including being the Arch-Druid,¹⁰² however things didn't happen to go towards greater egalitarianism.

In order to fulfill Carleton's requirements for being a student religious group, the RDNA had to file a Student Constitution with the Carleton Senate and appoint three officers. These three organizational officers of the RDNA were drawn directly from the liturgical roles and led to the development of the three primary Orders of Reformed Druidism. Fisher had already claimed initially to be an initiated "third order Druid in high school"¹⁰³ when the "Triumvirate" had first met, so Fisher apparently filled in this credibility-gap by applying one Order to each of the roles in the Liturgy. In the 1963 RDNA Constitution of the Carleton Grove, only one month into the group's existence, the ArchDruid was listed as being held by "at least a third order" Druid, the office of Preceptor by "at least a second order" Druid and the office of Server by "at least a first order" Druid.¹⁰⁴ The ArchDruid's requirement of being "at least a third-order" refers to the fact that Fisher had stated that there were actually **ten**(!) orders all together.¹⁰⁵

Here I must pause and refer you back to the second and third "essential" debates of Reformed Druidism; (2) how to detect Fisher-isms and (3) what could be done to delay a proposal until it could be determined whether or not it was a "Fisher-ism." Already we can see that the dreadful "self-feeding" process in (3) appears to have been established and permitted to attach itself to

Reformed Druidism. But before we assign some form of heavy guilt on the head of Fisher for "dooming" Reformed Druidism to eternal power-struggles and schisms that result from hierarchy, let's remember that none of the Founders "expected the group to outlive our time and life at Carleton."¹⁰⁶ The real "guilt," if such a thing exists, would have been the continuation of the previous structure along with the original philosophy, under David Frangquist and his successors. For it is they, who have appeared to have nostalgically retained the customs, laws and the seemingly unnecessary hierarchy that were first established to give cohesiveness to the group to oppose the Chapel requirement.

If Dave Frangquist truly believed in Druidism's simpler messages, why did he add Fisher's hierarchy and terminology to his own dissemination of the spirit of the Basic Tenets? Nostalgia? Lack of foresight? Fear of breaking with the past? A little of each, plus a realization that the RDNA was still needed by some at Carleton and something was necessary to keep the group from being mis-used or overly confused. The answer would be the role of the Third Order Druid, as guided by the Druid Chronicles (Reformed) and the Ordination service's instructions to the Third Order.



Figure 7 The Dapper Druid.



Figure 8 A Druid in summer attire?

Chapter Three:

Reformed Druidism

1964-1973

Expansion Beyond Carleton

In the spring of 1964, Druidism really looked as if it would fade away with Cherniack retired, Fisher slowly distancing himself from Druidism in preparation for Episcopal Seminary,¹⁰⁷ and the Chapel requirement about to be rescinded. Frangquist and Nelson, however, came up and asked to enter Fisher's mysterious Third Order, with the realization that they had a good thing going with the RDNA. Frangquist and Nelson had decided that they wanted to share Druidism with others after leaving Carleton, or as Zempel later put it:

"Due to the temporary nature of membership in the Carleton Grove, nearly every priest ordained can be expected to eventually serve a missionary function, making Druidism available other than its birth place."¹⁰⁸

Frangquist was not an *original* Triumvirate Founder (but close enough to be an honorary fourth Founder), but soon after the first service, he had become a very active Druid in the grove.¹⁰⁹ He did not make this commitment lightly and showed quite a bit of preparation:

"David [Frangquist], unlike myself [Fisher] and co-founders, took his Druidism very seriously, and meditated long and hard before asking for ordination as a 3rd order priest."¹¹⁰

Together, Frangquist and Nelson had decided to use and maintain the Third Order priesthood as a sort of check upon future groves from becoming too serious or becoming too dangerously wild. But they wanted to ensure that the Third Order would not become too domineering, or take itself too seriously. Most of all, the Third Order should not become a goal for title-hungry people on ego-trips.

A word here about the Third Order is in order. There is not much known about the traditional Patron of the Third Order, Dalon ap Landu outside of the RDNA, since he does not apparently exist in any archaeological or literary sources. There is some rumor that "Dalon ap Landu" is a variant of "Dylan eil Ton," which would explain the Welsh name "Dalon son of the Sea," but I suspect that there is little connection between the two. Dylan in the Mabinogi was a young boy thrown into the sea and drowned. In outrage, the sea has ever since been throwing itself in anger against the shore-rocks in an attempt to reach the malefactors. Perhaps there is a symbolic representation of the Druids continually throwing themselves against the breakers of Dogma? The only revealing verse in the Druid Chronicles, doesn't mesh with this hypothesis because it refers to Dalon as a tree:

"We have seen him on the bosom of the Earth-Mother: huge woody arms raised to the sky in adoration, strong and alive; and we have called His name Dalon Ap Landu."¹¹¹

If Dalon is a tree-god, that would explain why he's in charge of "groves," and their keepers, the Third Order. One friend has suggested that "ap Landu" be a college boy's pig-Welsh for "of

the land," which has as much chance of being true as any current theory. Isaac claims that at least one Masonic Druid organization, whose name he unfortunately can't remember, also has a Dalon Ap Landu. It is perhaps revealing of the mentality of Reformed Druids, that they would chose such an intentionally **obscure** Welsh name for the most important office of Druidism, a Patron that was for all intents and purposes laden with no preconceptions or descriptions.¹¹²

This type of attitude of letting others disprove their own misconceptions is similar to the essence of mysticism in fraternal organizations, when done correctly.¹¹³ The unfounded hopes, fears and expectations can build to a frenzy as the initiation approaches the climax. Then, all the danger is revealed to be a holy "joke" and one sees that all the disappointments were brought on by one's own frenzied fears and hopes. The result is that the initiate begins to realize that appearances can be deluding with regard to ritual and religion, necessitating a deeper observation. Unlike most of the fraternal organizations, Reformed Druidism's services are not secret, and the private nature of the Third Order ordination is merely done to form a closer bond, to leave a little bit of surprise for future initiates and possibly to reduce embarrassment in the unlikely case that the candidate is rejected.¹¹⁴ Several times, other non-Thirds would be around to observe it, but realistically, how many people would really want to tromp into the Arb at 6:00 am just to watch someone else's ordination?

In the spring of 1964 Fisher was reluctant to continue his Arch-Druidship into his senior year, primarily because he thought the group was becoming too close to a religion; however Fisher was hesitant to relinquish control. Nelson, wishing to be ArchDruid from a love of titles, began this new stage of post-Fisher Druidism. Under Nelson's brief summer ArchDruidcy in May 1964 to Sept. 1964, the Order of Worship was fixed as **the basic** liturgy and the Higher Orders (i.e. 4th to 10th) were established to "stimulate priests of the 3rd Order to continued spiritual inquiry," much like honorary academic degrees.¹¹⁵ The Higher Orders were also considered very extraneous compared to the First, Second and Third Orders. Over the years, however, the Higher Orders would flit in and out of the records, until the 1970s when the NRDNA wished to revive them as magical badges of office. After the Higher Orders were established, Nelson graduated and left Carleton to start the first of the missionary groves at Vermilion, S.D.¹¹⁶ during the summer of 1964, essentially acting as the ArchDruid of both Groves. Meanwhile over the summer, Frangquist founded the short-lived Ma-Ja-Ka-Wan Grove in a Wisconsin summer camp.

David Frangquist's subsequent two year reign as ArchDruid (under Nelson and Fisher's watchful auspices for 64-65) at Carleton from Fall 1964 to Spring 1966 completed the basic formulation of the hierarchy and philosophical foundations of the RDNA, except for the final clarification in 1971 to correct a few elements of sexism that were disturbing to many in the Reform.¹¹⁷ Because there were only a handful of initial priests on the membership rolls of the Council of Dalon Ap Landu during the early 60s, it was easy for a lot of rules to be hammered out in a consensus very quickly. The consensus tradition is very important to remember because, in later years, it became increasingly difficult to get the increasingly large rolls of priests to either abstain or vote positively on Council issues.

Complete authority over the Reform (if such a thing ever existed) was invested in the Council of Dalon ap Landu under the perpetual Chairmanship of the currently presiding ArchDruid of Carleton.¹¹⁸ This in effect turned Carleton into the central administration of the Reformed Druid movement in a vaguely similar way to how Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Islam and Judaism all have particular holy areas or "main Headquarters."

Voting membership on this Council was limited to those of the Third Order, each of whom must have been initiated by an Arch-Druid (who is, of course, of the Third Order).¹¹⁹ New dogma would require a consensus from the replies of **known**, not active, members of the Council who had been contacted.¹²⁰ If an Arch-Druid found a prospective initiate too fanatical, or likely to turn Druidism into a personal cult-following, they could do little more than avoid ordaining her/him into the Third Order, within reason.¹²¹ The flaw was that once a "rogue" slipped into the Third Order, there was probably nothing you could do to defrock them or stop their propagation. To defrock them seems to be an un-Druidic thing to do, because you would be claiming to understand their soul better than they could themselves. It was hoped that the Grove members would eventually spot the rogues and leave them.

Missionary Dilemma

Once they had been initiated into the Third Order, Nelson and Frangquist pondered how to form missionary groves away from Carleton. The problem, known as "the Missionary Dilemma," which hinged on the proper consecration of the Waters-of-Life, as performed in the Order of Worship.¹²² In order to properly consecrate 1st, 2nd and 3rd Order Druids, you need to have consecrated Waters-of-Life. The only way to consecrate the Waters-of-Life was to have a Preceptor (of the Second Order) and a Server (of the First Order) already present in the Grove before the consecration began. In a technical way, a traveling Third Order couldn't perform the ceremony or consecrate the waters without also having two traveling companions, one of at least the Second Order and another of at least the First Order. Since it was very unlikely that three such graduating Druids from Carleton would go on to the same graduate school, it appeared that Druidism couldn't technically ever leave Carleton.

For some reason, the possibility of carrying pre-consecrated Waters was never discussed. Perhaps because in the service, the unused portions of the Waters are quickly given in a libation to the Earth within minutes of the partaking by the attendees. Instead, the informal decision was made that a missionary Third Order Druid has the right to perform the ceremony in absence of an already consecrated Preceptor and Server. This decision had a precedent (not that precedents are needed or respected in the RDNA) in the way that Fisher (originally the only "consecrated" member of the Carleton Grove) ordained the first 2nd and 1st Order Druids into existence. This was vaguely referred to in the Council decision on 27 January, 1965 which stated:

"That any priest has the right to conduct worship and receive members into the First and Second orders."

With this obstacle to growth now removed and already tested at the Vermilion Grove of S.D. by Nelson and Frangquist in Wisconsin in the Summer of 1964, the missionary expansion of Reformed Druidism can be said to have begun.¹²³

Grove Liberty

Each resolution further limited the numbers of distracting cosmetic touches to ritual or organization that could be lobbied for "official" approval. That type of lobbying to a central authority would distract the attention of the Druids from the virtues of careful introspection and self-reliance. An example of this is that the *contents* of the Order of Worship were never firmly described in the Council's records.¹²⁴ There is no phraseology there that limits anyone from building upon or subtracting from the liturgy. One had liberal freedom to experiment with it, although few went too far away from the basics.¹²⁵ The only absolutely fixed ritual of the RDNA was for the Third Order. In

fact, it was the Third Order which is restricted by such laws, rather than the lower orders. Interestingly enough, no council was envisioned for the first and second orders, although some Founders have afterward said they see no reason those orders couldn't devise and hold their own services, just like the Higher Orders.

Because of early missionary activity by the Founders (Fisher, Nelson and Frangquist all started groves) and the inconvenience of regular correspondence, the difficulty of controlling and directing distant groves was quickly realized. It is also possible that they realized that a fully-enrolled Carleton student (which is **traditionally** the requirement for being the Archdruid of the Carleton Grove) just doesn't have the time to be bothered with supervising and/or controlling far-away distant groves. These elements when combined, led to a great amount of freedom being granted to possible future groves beyond Carleton.

By the Spring of 1966, all it took to found a grove was a Third Order Druid (who could ordain anyone to 1st or 2nd Order) and two other **elected** people to fill the appropriate liturgical roles during the initial service. The Grove's officers of Arch-Druid, Preceptor and Server were then elected by a majority and a new constitution was voted on usually by unanimity¹²⁶ and that was mailed to Carleton.¹²⁷ Amendments to a grove's constitution were generally by majority vote of a quorum of the grove's known members (1/8 or 1/3 of those of 1st order on up) at two consecutive meetings. Members missing the first meeting must be notified of the second meeting.¹²⁸ No specific contents were ever required for the later grove constitutions by the Council to be submitted to Carleton by the new grove, not even clauses of subservience to the Council! Freedom. Hoping to further limit extension of power by future Councils upon future groves, the Council declared:

"That the local Groves retain the right to organize themselves in any way which will best serve their own needs."¹²⁹

These rules taken together, allowed each individual grove the freedom to make any liturgical, hierarchical or theological rules that they wanted. In many ways it was like the separation of Federal and State government in the USA; with the Council being the Federal government and the local groves (including Carleton) being the States. The only thing the groves couldn't do was to claim that all the rest of Reformed Druidism also had to follow their own modifications. Any dissenters in the grove could leave or even step forward to be ordained into the Third Order, choose to schism from the group, and then form their own equally independent grove. Thus if Berkeley wanted all of its own grove members to declare themselves as Neo-Pagan to serve their own needs, there was nothing the Council could do about it, except to grumble about their exclusionary actions. What the Council *could* do was hope that the Berkeleyites would show enough independent will of their own, which they often did. But if Berkeley wanted all of Reformed Druidism to declare itself Neo-Pagan, then the Council would probably have to discuss and then vote on it.

It should be noted that the individuals of the Third Order, while given the privileges of holding services and ordinations, are **nowhere** granted control of the grove in matters of theology. Nowhere in the laws or traditions does a Third Order Druid have the right to tell someone that they are a "heretic" to Reformed Druidism. While a Third Order could theoretically opt to withhold services and ordinations until their parishioners agreed with her or him, such actions would be generally considered "un-Druidic" or at least a poor way to resolve internal disputes. I believe that the Records of the Council of Dalon Ap Landu, are rather vague on the powers of individual Thirds, and this may combat the

existence of personality cults, by encouraging the individual's personal beliefs. But there is no "bill of rights" for members, which is disturbing to me. You can have a charismatic Arch-Druid, but they should have a following based on love and understanding, not on fear of organizational rules/dogma. Entrusting theological issues to the *total* Council, would by default, keep the groves of the Reform open and free of local dictators. But I suppose, if a bad apple did emerge, they probably wouldn't allow members contact with the head organization anyway. If this wasn't the original intention, it certainly was the eventual effect.

Use of Early Publications

Perhaps the greatest legacy to the RDNA that Frangquist left to Carleton wasn't the Third Order and the Council, but rather *The Druid Chronicles (Reformed)*, *What is Reformed Druidism?*, and the *Green Book of Meditation (Vol.1)*. These three publications were considered, by many members, to have been the heart and soul of Reformed Druidism, along with the great outdoors.

The *Druid Chronicles (Reformed)* were completed before the Summer of 1964 by David Frangquist. They contain light-hearted accounts of the major events of the turbulent first year of Reformed Druidism from May 1963 to May 1964 under David Fisher. The humor and cheeky presentation of the Foundation was a balanced reminder to Druids not to get misty-eyed or seriously concerned about preserving the "sanctity" of the many organizational aspects. DC(R) also lists some of the early customs, lists the two Basic Tenets as the sole theology of the group, and provides a number of inspiring meditations to encourage individualistic exploration for personal truth. The book, itself, does not claim to be divinely inspired and there was no decision by the Council to make DC(R)'s statements or customs into official law. DC(R) was left behind as a helpful collection of suggestions, put into writing, on how Druidism was originally run (perhaps in case you'd like to duplicate it). Despite a lack of official endorsement for DC(R), all the different branches of Druidism have claimed that DC(R) is a good thing to keep around for a healthy grove. As we'll discuss later, the only problem with the DC(R) was that it had four verses in Customs that were sexist and would continue to frustrate attempts to legislate gender equality. So while I say it was never official dogma, it had some weight of implied tradition behind it.

The pamphlet "What is Reformed Druidism?" was the first summarization of the movement in Fall 1965, and variations of it were used up into the mid 1970s for recruitment at the student organization fairs at Carleton. Plainly written and to the point, it was a template of modesty for the group's outreach efforts.

The *Green Book of Meditations*, (The Green Book), was primarily compiled by David Frangquist between 1964-1966. Unlike the universal popularity of DC(R), the Green Book is practically unknown outside of the alumni from the Carleton Grove. Ostensibly, the Green Book was a collection of handy meditations for potential use at Druid Services by Arch-Druids who were too lazy or busy to research their own readings. As such, it is hard to understand its popularity at Carleton, who are usually pretty industrious in pursuing their interests. On successive readings, one quickly realizes that the Green Book is not just a random selection, but contains an underlying integrity. I feel, and many agree, that it generally sets forth to provoke thinking about such Druidical topics as "certainty," "leadership," "reality," "nature," and "individuality." In essence it contains some kernels of Reformed Druidism as understood by David Frangquist. Because it included illuminating examples from many of the world's existing faiths (including monotheistic ones), it

gave positive reinforcement to the Carleton tradition of openness to possibility of valid truths to be found in the teachings all faiths. In one way, the early grove resembled some of the inter-faith councils that developed at Carleton in the 1980s, providing a forum for different beliefs to be expressed and appreciated. It is amazing that Berkeley stayed so close to the Carleton ideals of openness as it did, without the Green Book. Perhaps this can be traced to the presence of the DC(R) and Larson, or maybe Druidism can sustain itself by common sense without reference to books?

Crowning Touches

The last hierarchical touch was the creation of a central record-keeping office for the RDNA. The April 26, 1966 decision required future ArchDruids of Carleton (each of whom will be a Chair of the Council) upon retiring to send a report of the state of Druidism to ALL members of the Council. This allowed the initial Third Order Druids to keep track of what was going on at Carleton and elsewhere, even if no voting took place, probably more out of curiosity than from a fear of "heresy." They certainly never expected the Council to get too large or to become tar-babied in politics, a fate that often enveloped the Arch-Druids of Carleton.

Not long after Frangquist stepped down in Spring 66, the Council had started to become a difficult (but not impossible) voting tool because, as membership rolls quickly swelled in the late 60s, it became very difficult to come to a unanimous consensus on basic issues or even just to keep track of the Council's addresses (especially updating the addresses of Third Orders consecrated outside of Carleton). The Council had done its main purpose by 1966 of setting up a basic system. The major flaw to be seriously debated until 1974 was how to remove any remaining doubts concerning sexual equality within the Third Order (considered to have been fixed in 1971). Basically, any further claims of dogma were left to the whims of the individual groves' members, if they even needed it.

"Druidism boasts no ethos. Since Druidism has never claimed to be a religion, dogmatism has always seemed incompatible with the [RDNA] organization."¹³⁰

We'll pick up the voting problems again later with Isaac's proposals in Chapter Five, but now let's address the question of whether Druidism is a religion or a philosophy.

Religion or Philosophy?

I think most scholars of Reformed Druidism will be surprised to learn that this issue of "Is Reformed Druidism a religion?" was debated again and quietly addressed in 1969-1970 in what I happily call "The Smiley Affair"¹³¹ when the RDNA took on a Vietnam era's draft board. Even before Isaac began his revolutionary testing of the RDNA's organizational limits in the mid 1970s, that important question of Philosophy vs. Religion had already been firmly decided by a definite "Maybe! Why don't you ask each of us?"¹³²

What is important to note is that although Reformed Druidism (as a whole) would find it difficult to claim to be a religion in the eyes of all its members, but its quite possible that an individual could claim that Druidism had become their own personal religion. The Reformed Druid groves (except maybe the SDNA) never required a Druid member to give up their previous religious affiliation or adopt a new one. This principle often boiled down to an assumption that the group can not and should not validly declare anything itself, something that can only be done by the individuals. This is an important lesson of Druidism

that I've often come across. This common assumption within Druidism was that one just had to have confidence in one's own beliefs because all theologies come down to an issue of faith, which is basically a personal choice of convictions. Besides, I've rarely found two people who can agree on the same air-tight definition of "philosophy" or "religion." The two definitions become especially difficult to separate if your group doesn't have any explicit gods or goddesses in them. Without definite deities, philosophies and religions both seem to be systems of moral and ethical guidelines to me. It should be remembered that even ethicists can disagree strongly with each other on what is ethical. More often than not, people "give in" a little in certain private opinions in order to further the pursuit of a group accomplishment, which can be good or bad.

It is interesting to note that Reformed Druidism seems to lack many of the elements considered important to the popular understanding of a religion. It lacks a world creation story (besides the story of the group's origins) and it simply refers to Nature as "one of the objects of Creation," which is rumored to be a "Fisherism" that somehow slipped into Reformed Druidism (although no one has really complained). We've already mentioned that Reformed Druidism has no explicit gods in its belief structure. It also lacks an obvious eschatology, it has no judicial system of rigid ethics or morals, there are no injunctions about family/social arrangements, it has no real problems with people editing/criticizing its own scriptures, it lists no legal punishments (e.g. chopping off people's hands), it proclaims no Messianic prophecies or exclusionary methods of claiming its people to be "the only chosen ones." By Western standards, it is, at best, a "half-baked" religion. But I believe that Taoism and Zen also lack these elements and yet they are considered to be religions. Which answer is correct?

In summary, the RDNA was amenable to its members believing (or not believing) in a god (or gods) on a personal level, but vagueness and indecision on this issue prevailed on a group level. I personally see it this way: the RDNA was originated as a philosophy on a group level and it had the possibility of becoming a religion on the individual level; as is evidenced in the following case.

"The Smiley Affair" Elaborated

I mentioned earlier that there were two cases where a united "front" was put on by Reformed Druids to surmount a concern from authorities to its membership. The first was the Chapel Requirement of Carleton College and the second was the US Draft Board; which I refer to as "The Smiley Affair."

Richard Smiley, (CL65:Fisher)¹³³ was a Third Order priest from the early days of Reformed Druidism who had founded the Purdue grove in 1966-7. Smiley was studying at Purdue and leading a grove there, but the Draft wanted to draft him after they realized he was no longer attending graduate school. Smiley saw a chance to use Reformed Druidism to protest both the Draft *and* the special exemptions from military service that were being granted to the priests of mainstream religions (but not to equally "religious" laity who merely lacked the hierarchical titles). In this respect, Smiley was acting in the true spirit of the Reform because

"He [Smiley] enjoyed playing the Game as much as anyone, but still was getting something out of it."¹³⁴

In the spirit of testing definitions, Smiley wrote to the Draft Board that he was a minister seeking a 4-D ministerial exemption.¹³⁵ When the Draft board cautiously wrote back that they were unaware of his Seminary training, Smiley flatly responded:

"I am a minister of the Reformed Druids of North America. I received my training concurrently with my regular undergraduate education, at Carleton."¹³⁶

Smiley, the Frangquists, Savitzky¹³⁷ and Richard Shelton¹³⁸ worked together to explore the loose governmental definitions of a minister, all of which hinged upon a person performing *organizational* functions in a religious group rather than holding definable *religious* beliefs.¹³⁹ Also hidden in this protest was the indignation common to young adults; namely, that the "elders" felt that a younger person couldn't be as valid in their beliefs as someone over thirty. Whenever a letter was required by the Draft Board to prove Smiley was a priest in good standing, the Arch-Druid of Carleton would send a **very formal** letter affirming Smiley's actions as *performing the required functions*.¹⁴⁰ The conclusion of the story was that the Council delayed the Draft board so long, that Smiley became too old to be drafted and Druidism remained happily **undefined** in its beliefs and never had to lie.

Smiley was all prepared to do the paperwork necessary for acquiring the legal and financial trappings of a religion. All this was primarily a delaying action until Smiley's surpassed the draft's limitation; there was little hope that they would actually accept his plea. About this time, the Universal Life Church, who will ordain anyone, went to court in 1970 to successfully protect one of its ministers from the Draft. As a result, the ULC membership swelled by the thousands. In some ways, Druidism is similar to the Universal Life Church, of which many Reformed Druids are also members for the ministerial credentials.¹⁴¹ The ULC "rights" start:

"Every person has the right to determine his/her own faith and creed according to conscience.

Every person has the right to the privacy of his/her belief, to express his/her beliefs in worship, teaching, and practice, and to proclaim the implications of his beliefs for relationships in a social or political community."¹⁴²

But regardless of the successful outcome, one sees a precedent that if a Third Order (or any other Druid, of course) should claim that Reformed Druidism is their religion, members within Reformed Druidism will generally support them without committing other Druids to accepting the RDNA as a religion. The above listed Druids were even cautiously supportive, of Smiley turning his Grove into a legal church; as long as the rest of the RDNA groves didn't have to become "official." Whereas Isaac could have pointed to this as a good reason to keep the Council going (if he had known of the Smiley Affair before 1974), supporting the option of Third Order minister status, the whole thing was accomplished without officially convening the Council.¹⁴³ Shelton felt that this was appropriate, since the draft board had only asked the Carleton Arch-Druid to verify that Smiley was "in good standing" and that he led a grove in West LaFayette, "both of which clearly fall within the Arch-Druid's competence."¹⁴⁴ The issue of incorporation was dropped after the Draft was canceled, until Isaac brought it up in 1974, and eventually his Pentalpha/Druid Chronieler group briefly incorporated in the late 70s, as did Live Oak Grove in the mid 80s.

The "Codex of Form" Affair

Partly due to a brief break in continuity during the winter of 67-68 and the chaos of passing time, much tradition had been lost and Shelton was the first ArchDruid of Carleton not to have personally met a Founder. Shelton, with a prodigious natural talent for legalese, attempted to resolve and clarify the motley assortment of customs, laws and traditions that were handed to him by Savitzky in the spring of 1969. Most of his codified statements have clear precedents from the original Blue Book of the Carleton Archives and the Records of the Council of Dalon Ap Landu. Shelton was determined;

"to settle one way or the other what I perceived as contradictions in the existing Record of the Council, I presented it [*the Codex*] to the Council for discussion only, and I later withdrew it. It was never put to a vote."¹⁴⁵

The Record of the Council, at that time, was defined as ALL of the past correspondence letters currently on file (kind of like a Talmud). There was a generally negative response in the discussion concerning the collection of customs in the Codex, although they did have precedents. The written replies acknowledged that the Codex showed the standard way how things had once operated, but the Council made it clear that they did not wish to give official or unofficial sanction to its very own customs as being the only "correct" way to perform Druidism, as that would have closed down other potential avenues of exploration and growth for its members. Some things are better left unofficial, since some questions and answers tend not towards edification.

What drew heavy fire were Shelton's three innovations (1) a Secretary to the Council to serve as an anchor due to the rapid turnover of the Chairmanship at Carleton and (2) explicit requirements to keep the Chair informed about new addresses, new Groves, new Priests and (3) seeking a way to replace the awkward entrance requirements for the Higher Orders. Reformed Druid priests bridled at being told that they were **required** to send in reports (although, in fact, the Records of the Council are pretty explicit on this fact). This showed that a strong objection to sturdier organization beyond the Grove level existed as early as 1969. In many ways, the previous "laws" of the council were sometimes being considered as "suggestions," not as inviolable rules. The Codex affair would later inspire another young reformer, Isaac, to codify Druid practices with similar reactions. The Codex affair, in this way, foreshadowed the more well-known Isaac Affair.

"It is no surprise that the Council that shot his stuff down in 1969 (and attributed nefarious intent to its author then) should get so hot under the collar again in 1974 (and likewise suspect the new author's motives)."¹⁴⁶

In many ways, the Codex Affair showed the extent to which the RDNA was willing to go and how far they definitely were not willing to go. The "Codex Affair" also alerted past Carleton RDNA Druids (especially the Sheltons) that the Carleton grove was going to require some occasional advice and supervision to keep it on the right path. A sort of protective attitude can be seen to have developed by the Council toward the Carleton Grove. In fact, even to some of the other groves, Carleton would become sort of a mystical shrine.¹⁴⁷ After the event, Shelton would help organize the Archives and made sure that new members had a chance to go through it.

Women's Equality

Despite intensive earlier legislative attempts, the RDNA could still "technically" have been viewed as a sexist institution in 1970 -as defined by its laws and printed customs. Most noteworthy amongst the evidence, there were 4 unpopular verses in the *Druid Chronicles (Reformed)* that had implied since 1964 that women were unequal to men in the priesthood:

13. But no priestess shall be admitted into the councils of priesthood, but rather she shall be given *unto* one of them as a gift of service to beauty.

14. For she who is called to be a priest shall be sealed up *unto* one Order only, and unto her shall be given the service of it for all time;

15. And she shall be called a priest not *of* the Order, but rather a priest *unto* the Order.

16. For so it is written; thus it was, thus it is, and thus it is to be. (Customs, Chapter 8:12-16, italics mine)

These statements in DC(R) were not carved in stone, but they did have the power of tradition and Fisher behind them. Up until the Fall of 1970, one of Carleton College's *In Loco Parentis* rules did not allow women to be out of their rooms after 10 pm. The penalties were stiff and permitted exceptions were rare. Since the Third Order requires an all night vigil of at least 7 hours (usually sunset to sunrise), women were effectively excluded from entering the Third Order. Whether or not this barrier to the Third Order was planned by Fisher is unascertainable. To get AROUND this tradition, and to allow women a chance to enter the 3rd Order and the Higher Orders, Frangquist and Nelson proposed that women could be given "**unto** the Third Order" without having to vigil. Women were now admitted to the Third Order, but with a stigma of being "**unto** the Order" instead of being "**of** the Order," like the men. However, in its own way, it was the first step towards greater equality, because it at least meant that women could get into the upper Orders. There was also the restriction of entry by women to only one Higher Order, with no such restriction on the men.

Frangquist, from the beginning, wished to amend this tradition still further and managed to pass the following rules through the Council of Dalon Ap Landu regarding women:

27 January, 1965 (voted)

Priestesses

(a) To delegate to the priests the right to individually consecrate priestesses to any order which they (the priests) may hold.

(b) To allow priestesses to hold the office of Arch-Druid, provided that they have first vigiled and been granted the right to perform the ceremony by the Council of Dalon Ap Landu.

This furthered cemented the entrance privilege of the women "**unto** the Third Order," an Archdruidcy, a Higher Order, or to hold a service. The women could now hold the Arch-Druidcy if they vigiled, but what if they did not want to risk breaking the curfew? Besides, there still was the problem that, even if the women vigiled *and* became Arch-Druid that she couldn't ordain other Third Order people (much less people to the Higher Orders, still mostly a Male preserve), and she couldn't be

Arch-Druid without *permission* of the Council. Men didn't need Councilor permission to hold services or to be an Arch-Druid. Frangquist was not yet satisfied and a further vote was taken and passed:

29 March, 1966 (voted by mail)

Priestesses

(a) To grant automatically to all priestesses who have conducted a vigil the right to perform the ceremonies of Reformed Druidism.

(b) To allow a priestess, while holding the office of Arch-Druid, to consecrate priests of the Third Order and priestesses unto the Order which she herself holds.

Part (a) again gave women, who actually *vigiled*, the unabashed right to hold any ceremonies (which included 1st, 2nd Ordinations), ordain people to the upper Orders that she holds, and to hold Orders of Worship services. Part (b) makes it clear that the female Arch-Druid need not require special permission of the Council to ordain 3rd Order Druids. Although not really important, there was also the restriction on the number of Higher Orders as said in the DC(R). Despite the vigil, many women were still traditionally called "**unto** the Order," according to custom of the DC(R), and therefore the earlier rules which talk about "priests **of** the Order" could possibly be interpreted as not including them.

So matters stood until 1969, by which time there had already been 5 female priestess admitted "**unto** the Third Order," and one woman to the Archdruidcy of Carleton. The Priestesses and most of the Priests resented the traditional wording "of **unto** t h e o r d e r , " r a t h e r than "**to** the order," but the tradition was still upheld by a few old fogies. After reading the 1969 Codex of From, Larson suggested a new referendum on the priestess issue, especially to deal with the four verses from Customs. This new call for reform struck a positive chord with many members and Larson (now Arch-Druid of the Berkeley Grove) asked Shelton to draft a new proposal on priestesses.

The completion of the vote took most of the rest of Shelton's Archdruidcy (spring 69 to spring 71). Generally, support was expressed by most of the members. While voting by mail was expected to take time, the real delay was caused by the reservations of a few of the older male Druids and by Shelton's insistence that only the male priests should vote; so that no possible question of the legality of the vote could ever be raised later on. The following was submitted for a vote to the council:

1 May, 1971 (Voted by Mail)

(a) To subordinate all previous resolutions of the Council concerning priestesses to this one.

(b) To allow a priestess who has conducted a vigil and who has been consecrated to the Third Order all prerogatives of the order, including the right to hold the office of Arch-Druid and so to consecrate priests and priestesses to the Third Order. In token of this she is known as a priestess of the Third Order.

(c) To allow a priestess of the Third Order who has been confirmed by the Patriarch of the given order all prerogatives of that order. Again, she is known as a priestess of the given order.

(d) To abolish any restriction other than those applying equally to priests on the number of high orders to which a priestess of the Third Order may be consecrated.

Eventually in 1971, the votes were tabulated.

"The four clauses that carried were finally passed by consensus, and we felt that this was a major step forward in the reform."¹⁴⁸

By this time, the curfew on women at Carleton had been rescinded, so this no longer posed a problem on women vigiling at Carleton, and dorms were now co-ed by floor. Part (a) ensured that reference to previous resolutions would not be raised in the future. Part (b) reiterated most of the previous resolution's positive points and changed the phraseology of "**unto** the Third Order" into "**of** the Third Order." Part (c) ensured the equal rights of a woman in a Higher Order. Finally, Part (d) removed any limitations on entry into multiple Higher Orders. These four amendments by the Council essentially negated the 4 verses of the DC(R), but it wasn't until the 1976 publication of the *Druid Chronicles (Evolved)* [known as DC(E)] that those verses were first excised (which incidentally upset many pro-priestess voters).

As Deborah Gavrin Frangquist related, one of the appealing things about the early RDNA was that its leadership was [somewhat] open to women, unlike other protest movements at Carleton. Besides that, the RDNA was attractive to women who liked to see Divinity represented in a female form. While that idea seems relatively old hat to us now, seeing and praising divinity as a Goddess was an exciting, revolutionary concept back then.¹⁴⁹ At that time, few mainstream churches permitted ordination of women. It is therefore relatively puzzling, in afterthought, that there is such a paucity of records left to us on the activities of early priestesses in the RDNA. Perhaps this is due to history's favoring those leaving written records of their conquests. However, priestesses show up and demonstrate the equal verve and vim of their views in the written records in the mid-70s during the Isaac debates. In the future, more oral interviews will have to be done to supplement the historical record of role of women and female priests in the RDNA.



Figure 9 Etching of a Druid collecting mistletoe. Perhaps Druidism harkens back to our monkey-days?

Chapter Four: Reformed Druidism 1968- 1982

Choosing Your Waters

Why was definition and exclusion so upsetting to Reformed Druidism? We are brought back again to my second and third essential debates and we're going to examine them now from a "non-Carleton" viewpoint. At Berkeley, Reformed Druidism first left its primarily collegiate base of operations to enter into the general society, where some Druids tried to make it meet the full spectrum of needs that exist in an adult's life.¹⁷⁰ Such "major" issues dealt with by "mainstream" religious groups include: marriage, births, deaths, spiritual maturation rites, and religious instruction of children.

The debates after the period of Shelton and McDavid's Archdruidy of Carleton (1969-72) become very difficult to understand or even to review appropriately unless you have a basic understanding of Berkeley's protest movements, the religious diversity of the Bay Area of California, and the rise of the Neo-Pagan and Wiccan movements. So we'll begin with some basics, although I would strongly recommend reading *Drawing Down the Moon* by Margot Adler to supplement my cursory presentation of Neo-Pagan and Wiccan beliefs. I do not have the time here to refute all the common myths about Neo-Pagan practices fostered by the Media.¹⁷¹ The best way to read this section is to generally add "but many disagree and differ" after my statements. Please forgive me the use of "RDNA," "NRDNA" and "SDNA" terms plus the unwarranted use of "Neo-Pagan" as a catch-all term. All four of these terms are very unsatisfactory and are riddled with exceptions, but I must refer to groups using those terms, whose labels often shifted every other year....

UC Berkeley in the Sixties

The University of California at Berkeley student protest movements received a disproportional amount of media publicity in the early 60s. Berkeley was of equivalent academic caliber to Carleton, but it was a large urban university with an attached graduate school, so that students hung around a lot longer than in Northfield. UC's Board of Regents, administrators, Science and Economic departments were also heavily dependent upon funding from the Defense industry, NASA and Atomic Energy Commission. As a result of this retractable funding and a rather conservative Board of Regents, UC found it exasperating when a small core number of students and/or faculty protesters brought bad publicity to the University. In addition to this, Berkeley city had a great deal of volatile racial tension, despite being the only major school district to voluntarily and peacefully integrate their schools.¹⁷² The result was a lot of heavy-handed, conservative suppression of discussion.

A result of the deceitful practices and unaccommodating attitudes by the Berkeley administration, and certain confrontative activists, led to the wild radicalization of many Berkeley protest movements. Radicalization happens when the other side is unwilling to yield you anything and the middle ground disappears, so you raise your demands to idealistic levels and then exploit the inevitable rejection of the "baser" test case to show to all the undecided moderates how "wrong" and "backwards" the

opposing side is about "common" rights and ideals. As a result of seeing an authority in a vilified light, the moderates will join the radicals rather than willy-wallying in the middle of the debate. A clue to a group becoming radicalized is some catchword resembling the expression "If you ain't for us, you are against us."

As a result of poor communication and intolerance, both sides became increasingly embittered and resolute in refusing mediation. Every earned victory for student or faculty liberties was followed by a new, more bitter battle. But when it came to Vietnam, the issue became too big to be settled on a campus level and it led to permanent widespread dissatisfaction and rebellion amongst students and their local allies. By the mid-60s, the Bay Area had become a magnet for rebellious youths and gurus as a result of the media lime-light on Berkeley.¹⁷³ These youths formed a large base for the Bay Area Counter-Culture and new forms of music, thinking and behavior began to flourish, sometimes just to spite the Establishment, but out of these experiments of individualism, several valid new ideas took deep root. Among these experiments, there were forming new ideas about religion.¹⁷⁴

The dissatisfaction with secular authorities eventually led to disgust with the religious authorities backing them up. Here, to a greater extent than Carleton,¹⁷⁵ was a profound distrust of "anyone over thirty" or who was linked to the Establishment. In the mid 1960s, the first of the groups to later identify themselves as Neo-Pagans were already developing. What had been an intense interest in Astrology, Fraternal societies, Parapsychology, Ceremonial Magick, Kaballah, Numerology, Zen and Divination understood from a mostly Judeo-Christian background, suddenly changed in the early 1970s when two new terms were introduced: "Neo-Paganism" and "Wicca."¹⁷⁶ I am not an expert in this history, but what is important for this study is that, amongst a small group of people, a lot of the trappings of the Occult scene were dropped along with the Judeo-Christian reference point. Everything was modified towards a new "from-scratch" reconstruction of the beliefs from pre-Christian religions, while often retaining 20th century ideals.¹⁷⁷ Their goal was to avoid the traps of thinking inherent in Western monotheistic culture.

This disorganized "revival" movement was vaguely named in 1972 by many people as Neo-Paganism. Wicca concurrently emerged under the initial leadership of the feminists, pushing a conception of divinity as having feminine (and sometimes masculine) traits. The differences of polytheism vs. duotheism, ancient religions vs. modern sources and terminological differences between Neo-Paganism and Wicca pale before their similarities. Both groups hold a reverence for Nature and a tolerance for other people's understanding of divinity and culture. While Neo-Paganism could be seen as an intellectual and emotional reaction against patriarchy, ecocide and monotheistic "Black and White" thinking, several people soon found Neo-Paganism sufficient, in and of itself, to provide the religious framework for their own lives. Initially, Neo-Pagans tended to focus on a specific ethnic group and its associated pre-Christian religious tenets, although eclecticism was becoming increasingly popular. The ethnic possibilities that quickly come to the Western-trained mind are Egyptian, Nordic/Germanic, Greco-Roman and Celtic. In the 60s/70s, Neo-Pagan groups like Church of Eternal Source, Asatru and Fere-Faerie already existed for the first three groups, but the field for Celtic Neo-Pagan religion was inhabited only by the RDNA and Wicca.¹⁷⁸ Wicca's use of Celtic symbology is dwarfed by the heavy reliance on multiple traditions that are non-Celtic in origin.¹⁷⁹ Therefore, Druidism was "needed" by the Neo-Pagan movement to complete the picture and the semi-public RDNA came in, fully formed, at a very propitious time for filling that void.¹⁸⁰

Differences from Early Missions

The early groves of Vermilion and Rapid City S.D., Ma-Ka-Ja-Wan in Wisconsin and New York #1 that had been founded by the Founders (+Frangquist) before 1968 were located at schools and had promptly folded when that Founder left the grove.¹⁸¹ The members of those groves tended to be a lot like those of Carleton, mostly disgruntled and rebellious young people of various religious backgrounds without much knowledge in the Occult or mystical religions. Besides, the RDNA was young and new members were expected to be students who would continue their own faith or find a new one after their experience with Druidism. However, in the groves which were founded after 1967 by Carleton students (which included Purdue, Berkeley, Stanford, Chicago, Ann-Arbor, New York #2 and Princeton) most of the Druids seeking to enter the RDNA were either not currently students and/or possessed an Occult or a strong Counter-Culture background.¹⁸²

In fact, we see in these new groves more examples of a Neo-Pagan trend of drawing members from the SCA,¹⁸³ SCI/FI,¹⁸⁴ computer geeks¹⁸⁵, Folk-dance¹⁸⁶ and role-playing clubs.¹⁸⁷ All of these groups, however, now had contingents of Neo-Pagans and seekers of *alternate* spirituality, who were ready *en masse* to run further with the ball than even the most dedicated Arch-Druid at Carleton's past groves. There was a bit of a generation gap between the mid-west and the west coast at this time. Those types of people were interested in examining alternatives to modern 20th century society and could easily have seen the RDNA as a "revival" of ancient Druidism. It wasn't that skeptical monotheists or atheists weren't still joining, but they were becoming a relative minority compared to the eager Mystics, New-Agers, Neo-Pagans and Wiccans.¹⁸⁸ These new types of people, however, would be probably confused by a "clearly Neo-Pagan" organizational RDNA system and its strange reluctance to call themselves Neo-Pagan (or anything else for that matter).

The Berkeley Grove

The Berkeley Grove was founded in 1968 by Robert Larson, who remained the ArchDruid from roughly 1968-77, sharing his great interest in early-Irish culture and its pre-Christian paganism with his grove. Larson had left Carleton (ungraduated) in the spring of '65, and had gone to Berkeley to join the Counter-Culture and live in "Hippie-dom." The Berkeley Grove was never associated with the University, because public universities would not allow religious groups to operate, recruit or meet on the campus and Larson never went to school there, but Bonewits did.¹⁸⁹ Larson's room-mate, the first and most energetic disciple was Isaac Bonewits, whose specialty was net-working, ceremonial magick, liturgical design, and what would become Neo-Pagan theology. Between these two men, and several later Druids, the Berkeley Grove found the concentration of talent, complementary Celtic interests and long-term commitments that would be needed to form a more consistent and longer-term RDNA activity than was feasible in Carleton's turbulent 4 year cycle of rotation.

Thus it was that the ideas of the little RDNA club of Carleton for religious and philosophical introspection was supplemented by the second major ideology, reconstructive Neo-Paganism instead of deconstructive Druidism. It wasn't that this idea of looking to the ancient Celts was new to the RDNA, but most of the original Druids of Carleton were busy elsewhere with introspection or the study of the living religions of the world. Perhaps the Carleton students didn't feel the impulse to piece together an old tattered system; which might have been

historically as tight-minded and dogmatic, in its own ways, as the mainstream Protestantism that they were trying to escape.

Interviews with Berkeley grove members shows that there were many intolerant religious sects (in addition to very liberal groups) roaming around the Bay Area. While this made Druidism's lesson of ecumenical introspection an even more vital message, it also limited its ability to openly attract refugees from an Intolerance War. Persecution there was a very tangible possibility, so that people may have been a bit leery in joining groups that were vague about their purpose and intent (like the RDNA). Because an RDNA priest is required to minister to those who ask for help,¹⁹⁰ irregardless of their religion, imagine how frustrating it would be to have to dodge specific theological questions and answer vaguely to label-seeking novitiates!

Indeed, there was a significant difference in age and religious attitudes among the members that generally entered the Berkeley Grove (and later-founded Groves). The Founders of the RDNA had originally intended Druidism to be such a bizarre and jolting concept that it would shake previous conceptions about religions down to their rudimentary bases among rebellious college students and thus lead them to a few years of new introspections. Since most of the Berkeley (and later groves) Druids were older than the average Carleton College student and had entered the RDNA with a Neo-Pagan or Occult background, the validity of drawing valid religious experiences from a variety of ritualistic forms did not seem too unusual or jolting. For Berkeleyites this was already accomplished. They quickly grasped that religious experiences could only be judged by oneself, but now they wanted to emphasize the RDNA's activities to bring individuals of all religious backgrounds into a group to celebrate/worship/study Nature, a group that was non-dogmatic and unpretentious. An excellent way to worship Nature, they thought, would be to follow the customs and stories of a true Nature-worshipping religion (e.g. ancient Celtic Druids) because they would be more finely tuned by centuries of practice.¹⁹¹ To them, the idea of studying Asian religions through the label Druidism might have seemed a bit bizarre, seeing as how there were already active religious groups practicing Asian religions in the Bay Area that could teach them Asian faiths in a much more "professional way."

Events Before the Isaac Affair¹⁹²

Isaac Bonewits enters the RDNA debates in 1972 as a powerfully energetic and intellectual person engrossed in the Bay-Area activities.¹⁹³ Isaac has some detractors of whom the researcher must be leery of listening to without some cross-checking of their tales with other testimonies. Dan Pierson once described Isaac as having "Negative Charisma" which meant that you couldn't help liking him in person, despite contrary messages from your gut instincts. Isaac was energized by the Neo-Pagan renaissance of 1972 where previously uncommitted Occult or Neo-Christian groups redefined themselves as Neo-Pagan; previously separate and individualistic people were now getting together and doing things. Around the time of the early SCA and Sci-Fi conventions, came the Gnosticon spirituality festival in 1974, after which the Festival movement of Neo-Paganism noticeably blossomed.¹⁹⁴ The result was more frequent and intensive net-working and hybridization between previously unacquainted and isolated groups who now recognized an underlying kinship through Neo-Paganism that transcended barriers of local ritual practices and dogma. We are dealing on a small scale with nation building concepts or "identity politics". The question facing Isaac was who was going to organize the Celtic/Druid facet and "lead" it into Neo-Paganism? Why not himself and his friends? They had a group with plenty of

flexibility, humor and history to it, so why not bring in the RDNA to fill this role?

The Council Revisited

Isaac would have been aware of the poor reception of the Codex of Form, the successful vote on women's equality in Reformed Druidism, and the tinkering theories on voting revision in the Council. Seeing all this activity in the Council may have got him thinking about further possible legal refinements.¹⁹⁵ While most of the elements of the Codex were dropped, one element remained ambiguous, the voting rules for the Council of Dalon Ap Landu. As of 1969, the only official statements pertaining to the Council's voting were:

To declare in perpetuity that the Arch-Druid of Carleton shall be the Chairman Ex-officio of the Council of Dalon Ap Landu.¹⁹⁶

To reserve to all the priests, collectively in the Council of Dalon Ap Landu, the highest authority of the Reformed Druids of North America.¹⁹⁷

Whereas all the previous Council votes had been pursued until they reached a consensus of all the members who had chosen to vote, this was only a *tradition*, not a *rule*. When Shelton's voting proposal was made, he was looking for unanimous positive votes with replies from a majority of the known members; with an unspoken hope that no negative votes would be cast. Clarification: if there were 23 Third Orders, at least 12 positive votes would have to be cast (and none against) for a bill to pass. It was assumed that all attempts at contacting members would have been made. When that proposal on voting failed to receive a majority *response* of unanimous affirmation after being on the floor for two years, it was withdrawn in June 1972 by McDavid. The last measure to pass the Council (the Priestess vote of 1971) was passed by unanimity of the votes cast (after much cajoling of some patriarchal objectors) with a majority of potential voters participating. Therefore, it appeared to be a sturdy tradition of unanimity is required for a proposal to be approved by the Council and it having been voted upon by at least half the members.

Following the unanimous passage of the proposal giving female priests unequivocal equal treatment and ranking as their male counterparts in 1971, the Council records show a 2 year gap (June 1972 to July 1974) in Council activity and proposals. The ensuing silence during the reigns of the three succeeding busy Carleton ArchDruids gave the Carleton Grove (and it's Chair of the Council) the understandable appearance of having died off,¹⁹⁸ which (according to Berkeley's knowledge) would have only left Larson's Berkeley grove and Isaac's Twin Cities grove. The truth was that the Carleton graduates just couldn't think of another proposal that wouldn't prove divisive and there had never been much "Council-wide" correspondence before, just friendly letters between individual friends. Or as McDavid put it in 1972:

"I do not see any issues concerning the Council as a whole, and apparently no one else does."¹⁹⁹

But importantly from Isaac's goals of forming a stable Druid organization, Carleton's ArchDruids were neglecting to send out the required "State of the Groves" letters upon their retirement, showing obvious irresponsibility in what appeared to be the duties of the "national" headquarters of the RDNA. What if an issue did come up that needed an official OK from the Council? With no active Chair of the Council, how could the Council be convened and the votes counted and declared?

The Isaac Affair Begins²⁰⁰

Isaac Bonewits realized that the RDNA would be a very appealing organization, especially for Celtic enthusiasts, in a predicted upcoming flood of interest. Bonewits saw a need to transform the Carleton Druids from a "Meso-Pagan" stage of evolution towards the "Neo-Pagan" age, just like other groups had already done.²⁰¹ More than that, Isaac wished to *define* the ideas, organization and documents of the RDNA into concise, "marketable" products. To test the waters for his rather complicated agenda, Isaac sent out a proposal on July 18th 1974 to the Carleton ArchDruid to distribute to the Council members for an immediate vote. I recommend reading the full text of Isaac's letters in the Apocrypha, which I will make many references. The tone, haste, assumptions and verbiage of the letters by the young Isaac helps to explain the resulting animosity, misunderstanding, confusion and hostility that was engendered towards Isaac amongst many Carleton and non-Carleton Druids. In hindsight, the letters can be seen as Isaac's way of explaining himself before doing something new on his own. But to the Reformed Druids, it was a bolt out of the blue and looked like an aggressive reformation attempt.

This letter proved to be a set-back for Isaac's public relations with many of the Druids on the Council in Shelton's block This letter put about 20 minor changes or statements of doctrine to be debated and voted upon between July 18th and September 15th, with a *majority* vote to decide the matter or else a schism would take place!²⁰² This was seen as break-neck speed, since the vote on the equality of female priests alone had taken two whole years of debate to reach the traditional *consensus*, and that decision merely affirmed a standing tradition! A few of Isaac's later letters better defined his terms and intentions, but they did little to abate the fact that such proposals would hastily lead the RDNA in the direction towards greater formalization and organization (especially above and beyond the Grove level). In other words, the changes would result in a completely different organization, much like the eventual form of the ADF.

Inclusivity and Exclusivity

Now the RDNA has always prided itself about being potentially compatible with any religion (or lack of religion), but Neo-Paganism could not make the same claim in the early 70s. In its youth, Neo-Paganism generally saw monotheism (or rather, Judeo/Christian/Islam) as being patriarchal and anti-Nature and therefore not compatible with itself.²⁰³ Their position has mellowed out over the years, as exceptions were noted here-and-there, but during the Isaac debates the Carleton Faction definitely saw this attitude being expressed by Isaac. Now if Isaac had solely described Neo-Paganism as:

"Neo-Paganism sees divinity manifest in all the processes of nature. According to this view, Neo-Paganism is a constantly evolving philosophy that views humanity as a 'functional organ within the greater organism of all Life'"²⁰⁴

there wouldn't have been *too much objection*. But instead many Druids were getting their primary definition of Neo-Paganism from Isaac as:

[Neo-Paganism includes] "polytheistic (or conditional monotheistic) nature religions that are based upon the older or Paleo-pagan religions; concentrating upon an attempt to retain the humanistic, ecological and creative aspects of these old belief systems while

discarding their occasional brutal or repressive developments, which are inappropriate."²⁰⁵

and

"Let us begin by admitting that we are a religion and describe ourselves to each other and the outside world roughly as follows:

The RDNA is an Eclectic, Reconstructive, Neo-Pagan Priestcraft, based primarily upon Gaulish and Celtic sources but open to idea, deities and rituals from many other Neo-Pagan belief systems...."

"We are willing to interact philosophically and ritually with members of all other belief systems that are compatible with our own approach and Nature."²⁰⁶

While mostly the same description as that of the earlier definition, Isaac's version appeared to have an implicit dislike for monotheism and was concerned with organizational politics. For many, "the main problem [with Isaac's definition] was that it was becoming exclusive, even in implication."²⁰⁷ Such a firm alliance with any group (such as Neo-Paganism) could have been seen as an alliance against another group(s).

Despite Isaac's claim that the RDNA members from Carleton were against Neo-Paganism, most members were actually more anxious about Isaac's manner, and there was a difference between the two. They were very unsure of Isaac's intentions, or as one put it:

"The cardinal rule of the Third Order was always keep everybody guessing. Isaac picked up on it in spades. We never did really know what Isaac was up to."²⁰⁸

But, many finally understood that this far-away and strange Neo-pagan movement wasn't some kind of "evil cult" and then affirmed Isaac's **personal path** of Druidism,²⁰⁹ but firmly stated that Reformed Druidism was not synonymous to them with Neo-Paganism. To some, it was as restrictive on Druidism to describe the RDNA as Neo-Paganism, as it would have been to call it Taoism, Neo-Shinto or Mystical Christianity.

"Dick [Shelton] replied that while Neo-Paganism was *compatible* with the Basic Tenets, it was not *required* by them. He also said that he opposed all the attempts to *impose* such a doctrine on the Reform. I maintained this policy during my term as Arch-Druid."²¹⁰ (emphasis mine)

"Let us in particular not represent our private paths as Reformed Druidism."²¹¹

Others expressed hesitancy also.²¹² Even Larson, from Berkeley, was opposed to calling the RDNA a Neo-Pagan religion.

"Rather than supplying a set theology, mythos, ethos, or whatever, Druidism supplies a basis from which each individual Druid defines his own mythos, ethos, etc.

"Rather than looking upon Druidism as a religion or a philosophy, let us look upon it as a way to achieve or augment a religion or philosophy.

I am opposed to Isaac's attempted redefinition of Druidism as "pagan,"...[and] I consider such a definition as over-restrictive for Reformed Druidism as a whole. For individual druids and groves, however, it's a different matter."²¹³

Some people will always dislike the accumulated baggage for the term "Pagan," irregardless of whether Paganism is good or bad, and efforts to "reclaim" the work. So, using it in your definition may frighten off a lot of foolish people.²¹⁴ These are the very people who need to feel free to join and shed their fearful definitions. The problem with the name "Neo-Pagan" has led to many long defenses by Neo-Pagans against all sorts of misconceptions by "outsiders." Their frustration has reached the point where many Neo-Pagan groups have chosen to refer to themselves as "the Old Way" or other similar terms that are less laden with divisive meanings. Reformed Druidism was special in that it claimed it was separate from, but applicable to, all other religions; although some faiths were more difficult to accommodate. The RDNA had been attractive as an organization because it was not inclined to make any such divisive conclusions, definitions, affiliations, alliances, or blanket statements:

"We had also done something rather wise, early on, and I don't know whether it was Fisher or consensus. Druidism was compatible with any other religion, even if other religions denied that."²¹⁵

"As Druids, however, we can only affirm a mutual desire to ask ourselves questions about the meaning of life, and about the degree to which religious truth can be truth for us."²¹⁶

Some Druids, both from Carleton and in California, felt that this "definition-making" was an attempt by Isaac to discourage certain members in the group from staying, because Reformed Druidism would then *only* be for Neo-Pagans.

Mike: Were the members [of Berkeley] ever before [circa 1976] required to renounce their previous religion?

Stefan: Never! Never! That's b*llshit! The whole philosophy here was: "Be what you want to be." But, when you were in circle,²¹⁷ you were a Druid. That was the philosophy here. You could be any other religion, but when you were here, you were a Druid. Period. That's the way it should be."²¹⁸

Stefan: One of my roommates became a Jes-oid,²¹⁹ but we were perfectly willing to accept him for what he was... forced out by Isaac.... Roman Catholics.. Jews... As I understood it, in Reformed Druidism, everybody was accepted."²²⁰

Thus, even a "Jes-oid" could have found acceptance in Reformed Druidism of the early Berkeley RDNA. Unfortunately, once the existence of Neo-Paganism became widely known, people would probably naturally assume that the RDNA was not open to monotheists or atheists. That has proven to have been one of the sad after-effects for many Carleton RDNA, because, ever since the rise of Neo-Paganism, Druidism couldn't easily claim to be unlike anything you've ever seen before. It became very easy for outsiders to pigeon-hole it as Neo-Paganism.

"The near-universal association of Druidism and Neo-Paganism has kept me out of public Druidic life for nearly 20 years (Isaac lost the battle but he won the war)."²²¹

Emphasis on Celtic Elements:

It is interesting to note that the Neo-Pagan enthusiasm for drawing inspiration from Ancient Celtic religion occurred at precisely the same time as many of the present definitive books on Ancient Druidism were published. In fact, since 1966, a veritable flood of good research has been published on ancient Celtic societies, drawing upon a multi-disciplinary review of available data. I suspect that if the Founders had started with the foresight of post 1974 events, they might have chosen a different name for the group than "Druids."

Due to an understandable mistake, Isaac had assumed that the other RDNA groves had been as interested in Celtic religion as his Twin Cities Grove or the Berkeley Grove. After all, Larson's specialty was paleo-Irish studies, he came from Carleton and Celticity is what Larson had explored with the Berkeley group. The tradition of exploring modern religions was never heavily explored in Berkeley, although the policy of allowing anyone of any religion to join did exist. Isaac just couldn't understand how these people from Carleton could invoke the names of Celtic gods and not consider that they were actually dealing with what were, to him and his friends, real deities. Despite all the Celtic surface trappings, the Berkeley Grove was not culturally restrictive, and many members explored various faiths and ideas through Reformed Druidism under Larson's laissez-faire Archdruidy.

Emphasis Upon Ritual

Occultists and Neo-Pagans, even more so than the practitioners of most mainstream religions, believe rituals and prayers can affect reality. The form and contents of ritual in many occult and Neo-Pagan groups can take upon themselves an overwhelming importance.²²² Perhaps, they needed to do something to keep busy? If you feel that the way a liturgy is performed affects the mental state of the congregation, then liturgical experimentation might prove beneficial to the search for truth. This is perhaps one aspect in which the older Druids didn't experiment too much, but they never objected to it. If one of the goals of the search for religious truth is to thereby improve or change the world, then the improvement of your methods of attainment of truth is a valid exercise.

But Reformed Druid ritual wasn't just about getting things done, it was also about being together in an enjoyable way. It is pertinent to state that even the Carleton RDNA had its share of magick-working or special rituals going on from the foundation of the RDNA up to 1980. There were weather-workings, the "Druid curse," divinations, an incident of speaking in tongues and prophesy, "exorcisms" of the spirit of war, consecrations of altars, prayers, marriages, "Druidings," and occasional blessings.²²³ But many of these were done from an understanding of the power of one's faith being the source of power or as an innocent experiment with their "tongues firmly planted in their cheeks." The older Carleton Druids, despite their dabbling in magick (especially weather working), did not see group ritual as having much purpose in and of itself for Druidism. Ritual was more incidental in some ways.

"Cannot men seek for answers without the crutch of ritual which has no religious purpose? I can only answer that ritual has a

value because it can be used by different men in different ways.

"For one man, the sacrifice of life²²⁴ is the offering of himself to a god or gods. To another it is offering up of his mind to a search for truth."²²⁵

Frangquist reminds us of the dangers of ritual indulgence:

"But we have also recognized that ritual is most often a hindrance; and to eliminate it is simply to encourage non-ritual to become the ritual. Rather, as Druids, we have endeavored to build a ritual which will be the destroyer of its own importance."²²⁶

Ritual flow and directing of magickal energy was important for Occultists since they believe it can significantly change reality, just like prayers in Christianity, and not just changing themselves. However, explaining this whole ritual process is an art and science that no two Occultists ever could entirely *define* in the same way. Reformed Druidism never sought to justify what was in its ritual, because the **content** of the Order of Worship was never fully finalized. Neo-Pagan and Druid experimentation had been always tacitly encouraged within undisclosed limits.

The Use of the Council

Isaac's other big gripe was that the Council was "inactive" and should be constantly debating to keep their Druidism "in shape." The state of meditation and introspection is not always an easy state to enter. For some, it requires self-discipline or asceticism, for others seeing a mere falling leaf or a chance conversation may catapult them into the mysteries of the multi-verse. Druidism is a "never ending search" for religious truth, but that does not mean that Druidism is a "never-resting search." A lag here or there in the correspondence may be part of a greater rhythm of rise-and-fall. For those who have difficulty in exploring Druidism alone, the presence of others in conversation may light-up new avenues of inspection. While at College, one is already in a continual state of constant challenge over the validity of truths, but such a state is much harder to maintain in the loneliness after graduation. I suspect that this search for continued Druidic siblinghood after college is one of the main motivators for the missionary efforts of the Carleton RDNA. Unfortunately for many missionaries, something seemed to have been missing in the new groves, some mysterious Carleton flavor. Many found that they spent more time explaining what Druidism *was not*, rather than being able to explore Druidism. I suspect that the Council's true business up to 1974 was much more oriented towards this lonely communication of observations between far-spread Druids than as a forum for the debate of referendums.

A great concern, that never left many RDNA members, was that Isaac would ordain so many Third Order priests who would be unconcerned with the original purpose of *unconditional* tolerance and unanimity that the Council (or a pseudo-Council) would become "functional." Once functional, such a Council could pass legislation or officially advocate actions that, by claiming to be believed by all members (although decided only by a majority), would alienate many former members into sadly abandoning any formal connection with the RDNA. It was okay for a single member to expand their own views, but it was not kind to force their conclusions upon the Council or even their own grove. Frangquist, long ago, had come to the conclusion that:

"religion is essentially a question of personal conviction. This is the reason for the failure of the student negotiation committees.

Committees may provide help in solving political problems, but not in religious problems. The committees have tried to deal in logical arguments; religion deals in faith."²²⁷

For some, Reformed Druidism had quickly become an intensely private and personal search, so much so that they had dropped from participation in Groves, after the annual diaspora of graduation. These Druids did not take kindly to the assumption that their search had to be open to the examination of others through constant correspondence in order to be valid. Nor did they like the idea that Druids participating in Groves were more "active" than solitary contemplative Druids. The search for truth could also be helped by private conversations with non-Druids. One may well wonder if the mere act of living was true Druidism in action. Therefore the attempt to bolster the identity of Reformed Druidism by increasing the required participation in the Council met with such reactions:

"Communication is a convenience and proselytization is an option, but if I choose to develop quietly by introspection and to write privately to my friends, I am as much an active Druid- and, I believe, contribute as much to the Reform- as if I broadcast my views to the entire Council of Dalon Ap Landu."²²⁸

Isaac also feared that the Carleton ArchDruid, as chair of the Council of Dalon ap Landu, was not stable enough for keeping Reformed Druidism alive as an *organization*. In this attitude, he was again missing the point. The high turn-over rate at Carleton was considered to be a boon to their organizational nexus; it essentially prevented Druidism from ever being secure enough in its footing that it could be bureaucratic or imperialistic. Shelton, who had six years earlier attempted the same defining and stream-lining process with the Codex, was now wisely trying to caution and slow-down Isaac:

"If you would seek to save Druidism, you will lose it; but if you seek the Mother and what she can teach you, Druidism will grow, prosper to her joy and to your great benefit."²²⁹

Evangelism and Missionary Activity

Perhaps another thing about Isaac that worried many Reformed Druids, especially from Carleton, was Isaac's insistence on speedy growth, recruitment and swapping priestly ordinations with Neo-Pagans of other traditions. Before 1976, new groves generally only appeared when a Third Order Druid had to leave a pre-existing grove and move to a new area for a while. While recruitment was an understandable necessity to build and maintain a grove around oneself, the desire to plant and fill up new groves for their own purpose, that was a bit more unusual. Usually, a priest would only ordain a person to the Third Order when that person had been with them for awhile (perhaps a year). Isaac was suggesting that roving Missionary Druids should begin ordaining priests and priestess from other Neo-Pagan religions (with little to no background in Reformed Druidism) into the Third Order so that a few missionaries could seed lots of new groves. This driving interest in the Third Order disturbed many of the older Druids. A concern with evangelism was a concern with evangelism. A few members were puzzled and asked themselves questions like; is he motivated by a fear of a second "burning times" decimating the ranks, eagerness to share an interesting outlook, or a desire to take over the council? To them,

the preservation or expansion of the priesthood of the Third Order was not to be taken so seriously. By emphasizing the Third Order, one may forget about the equality, regardless of their order, amongst all Reformed Druids.

While Reformed Druids often pride themselves that there are few lessons to learn when teaching Reformed Druidism, most will realize that there are often many lessons that one has to un-learn; simplicity often being a hard concept for new-comers to understand. If nothing else, the sense of urgency (possibly because of Isaac's concern to promote eco-awareness) in Isaac's letters seemed just a little bit too manic for the slower, more contemplative Druids.

Over-Emphasizing These Debates

The real lasting achievement of the Isaac Affair was to generate a great deal of worry *and* introspection among members of the Council. They were waken from a lethargic contentment by the constant goosing of Isaac and Larson.

"From my communications with Isaac, it would seem that he has stirred up a minor hornet's nest with his proposals. Good. That was the intent. Now that he has you thinking about the RDNA as more than a quaint club and has you concerned (or so I hope) about its future, perhaps something can be accomplished."²³⁰

In this way, the Druids are ironically in debt to Isaac because, for many, they too had been unaware of how much of what they believed to be Druidism was **also** beyond the Basic Tenets. Everything one brings to Druidism necessarily goes beyond the beliefs required by the Basic Tenets. In this way, both sides realized the pomposity they each had been nurturing from being out on contact with other Druids.

Rather than dwelling anymore upon the two fascinating years of retorts and recriminations, or providing a running commentary of one-on-one debates,²³¹ I'll leave that to your study, and I'll return to my history and put the debates into a larger context of the history of Reformed Druidism among the branches in the late 70s. I should mention here to future historians that many of the things said in those two years were out of justifiable shock, confusion and ignorance, but were often patched up by unofficial and unrecorded communications between the Druids of the many factions. In fact, once they had overcome the common misconception that Neo-Pagan Druidism had to be anti-monotheistic (i.e. rejecting the validity of some paths of religions) most Carleton members finally had accepted Isaac's Neo-Paganism as a good thing for him and others.

In fact, it has been very easy and pleasantly diverting for a researcher to become over-absorbed in these written debates and feel that Isaac spoke for-and-of the greatest concerns of all the NRDNA and SDNA people. If anything, the Isaac debates brought a clearer understanding of what Reformed Druidism was not to many people. However, in reality, some of the NRDNA and SDNA Druids had many of the same disagreements as the Carleton RDNA with many of Isaac's plans and politics.²³² These conflicts in California increased until 1981 or 1982 when Isaac finally left Reformed Druidism to work on a fresh start with the organization "Ár nDriaocht Féin." Therefore let us widen the perspective to relate the diversity that was the NRDNA and SDNA.

The After-Math of the Initial Isaac Wars:

As Bradley related to me, there were far too many independent-minded Druids in the RDNA and New RDNA traditional camps by the 1970s for Isaac or anyone else to tighten the Reformed Druid organization and its definitional identity without excluding large numbers of the current members. The results were therefore predictable; a majority of the replies from Council members disagreed with Isaac's program; some favored better communication channels while remaining "unorganized" and loyal to the Council and a few Council members followed Isaac into a full schism.²³³ The three branches of Reformed Druidism then came into name based on these perceptions at this point: respectively the RDNA, the New RDNA and the third group became the Schismatic Druids of North America. The SDNA was to break many of the formal ties with the Council's authority, so as to determine its own national rules, but still retaining the Reformed Druid apostolic succession and basic hierarchical pattern and scriptures. The schism was perhaps a wise move by Isaac, because an attempt to "defrock" the earlier members would have just stirred up more animosity and wasted more time and energy from his mission. It was much simpler for Isaac to form a new smaller subset within the expansiveness of Reformed Druidism and then to experiment with new forms of organization.

New Reformed Druids of North America

Now the initial ArchDruids of the early NRDNA groves were, surprise!, past Carleton students: Larson of Berkeley, Savitzky/Uggla of Stanford and McDavid/Bradley of Chicago.²³⁴ The early NRDNA, in association with the SDNA and HDNA,²³⁵ felt that an *official* Provisional Council of ArchDruids (PCoA) was necessary to discuss new issues and release "steam" to prevent any future explosion of built-up tensions that could result from the Druidic vice of infrequent-communication. It would also allow an exchange of religious insights to the benefit of all and take over the duty of the Chair of the Council in case the Carleton Grove should fail.

The RDNA Groves of Ann Arbor, New York #2, and Carleton were deeply suspicious of the PCoA²³⁶ and would much rather have had an *unofficial* PCoA,²³⁷ which would have been more in spirit with the anti-organizational streak of Reformed Druidism. They also disagreed with the idea that Arch-Druids could vote on issues that affected their groves, without allowing the grove to affect such a vote. Understandably, because of the PCoA's composition of mostly ex-Carleton students, there was a PCoA decision that stated:

"That no Reformed Druid should speak for the beliefs or nonbeliefs of all Reformed Druids, save to mention the Basic Tenets outlined in The Book of the Law, and that members of each Branch of the Reform should speak only for themselves."²³⁸

After that statement, the PCoA mostly talked about three issues: the method and contents of printing of the Druid Chronicles (Evolved), keeping a second record of Grove statistics in case Carleton went 'dormant' again (which was not infrequent), and to forward the voting proposals and other statements of theology to the Council for an official vote.²³⁹ It is important to note that these three issues were never voted upon by the Council due to a forgetful error to mail the ballots, they did show the rather limited agenda of the PCoA.²⁴⁰ Even getting the Arch-Druids, usually the most "responsible" Druids, to communicate with each other was proving to be difficult. The end-result was

that Druids everywhere firmly understood their independence and went on ahead with their own local grove projects without asking for the Council's permission anymore, just like I believe the Founders would have hoped. The communicative aspect of the defunct PCoA was performed later by the publication of the Druid Chronicler newsletter.

Schismatic Druids of North America

The SDNA was the embodiment of Isaac's reforms and its headquarters were generally centered upon whatever grove of which Isaac was ArchDruid (which then became called the "Mother Grove"). In a unprecedented flurry of activity over the six years after the Letter, Isaac had ordained over 15 Third Order Druids across the country, all "officially" therefore SDNA. The touchiest point for the SDNA was the stipulation that only self-avowed Neo-Pagans would be ordained to their Third Order and fill their liturgical offices. Isaac wanted to ensure that no more neo-Christians, Unitarians and Taoists would clutter up further the Neo-Pagan definitional and organizational experimentation of the SDNA. Strangely, many of those that he ordained refused to follow this SDNA practice.²⁴¹

Here we come up again with the difficulty of a single individual keeping updated address lists of the Council and coordinating activities. The Carleton Druids and those from the early graduate school groves were easy to locate through the College's alumni offices. It was much more difficult for Isaac to keep track of the many people he had ordained because they were not tied to a central tracking institution (unless you count Isaac himself) and they often neglected to keep him informed of address changes. Add to this the Neo-Pagan and Reformed Druid tendency to belong concurrently to several religious organizations that may take precedent, and you'll see that Isaac was slowly learning a valuable lesson: Neo-Pagans and Reformed Druids are often rather ungovernable people upon which to build complicated, national organizations; much like trying to herd cats. Moreover, it was certainly taking a lot of time and money on his part to keep a firm national group identity going. Currently, authorities with pro-organizational prejudices will often give more credence to a group than to an individual when protesting or defending religious rights. Isaac wanted that kind of mainstream recognition for Neo-Paganistic Druidism, and to achieve this there were necessary activities for Druidism, such as hiring paid clergy, showing more external structure and playing other games of bureaucracy.

Isaac describes his difficulty in dealing with other Neo-Pagans by a theory called "The Ten Year Gap."²⁴² Like an Old Testament prophet, Isaac was residing on the cutting edge of the intellectual debates, far ahead of the general crowd. Many of the current issues about centralization, standardized definitions, paid clergy, membership fees, proselytizing, day-care, legal defense, seminary training, clergy evaluation and legal "church" status were being broached by Isaac and a few others in the early 70s, about ten years before they become acceptable issues for debate amongst the general Neo-Pagan community. It is like Noah's warning being ignored and scorned until the rain starts falling; only then were the previous insults retracted by his enemies and old wounds became healed, if ever. The traditional Carleton reaction to this formalization might have been; let your other religious group-affiliation(s) take care of those issues and keep your Reformed Druidism simple and free.

Title-Happy Druids

An important fact for the researcher to realize is that most Reformed Druid groves were playing fast-and-loose with those three major definitional titles and were constantly changing "sides" and even gleefully making up new branches like "Orthodox DNA," "Humanistic DNA," "Hasidic DNA," "Zen Hilaric DNA," "Norse DNA" or even returning back to RDNA to describe each grove's individual bent. In September 1978, even Isaac was so uncertain as to what the differences were between these many titles, that he chose to limit them to "RDNA" for groves that were not composed primarily of Neo-Pagans and NRDNA for groves that were primarily composed of Neo-Pagans (including the SDNA).²⁴³ Even this labeling proved unsatisfactory to some Druids who weren't sure they were Neo-Pagan, Wiccan, Humanist, etc.

Disagreement from NRDNA and SDNA

While every NRDNA and SDNA Druid seemed to disagree with Isaac on many issues, it is only fair to say that they also disagreed with every other NRDNA and SDNA Druid on a number of issues. Isaac, for his all his faults, was a respected mover and shaker in the west coast branch of Druidism. Remember the Golden Rule that "disagreement among Reformed Druids is the general reality and that agreements are the unusual exceptions." In a way, the illusionary unity of the Carleton Faction was merely a consensus of agreement that future agreements on such issues was impossible so don't bother trying to pass those new proposals. But, that doesn't mean they didn't enjoy a good debate.

Isaac's prominence in most of the debates was a result of his tendency to stick his neck out and play the "devil's advocate" just to ruffle another Druid's feathers²⁴⁴ and thereby have a really good all-out debate. Knowing and writing to so many people, Isaac ruffled a lot of people's feathers. Unfortunately, although Isaac was not especially good at apologizing, neither were any of the other Druids.

As with the study of any Neo-Pagan group, one must remember that the prominence of the squabbles over power often hide the underlying agreements. The primary effect of the infighting politics of the 70s in Reformed Druidism was to "burn-out" the Arch-Druids and thereby weaken local grove stability. In hindsight, there also appears to be a natural rise and fall of Groves. Groves usually faltered when the close friends at the core of the grove had to move somewhere else or couldn't meet on a weekly or even other-weekly schedule. Groves started up when an Arch-Druid had regained the financial stability to host rituals and parties for their friends.²⁴⁵ The vast majority of Druids, who were not of the Third Order, found the politics of organizational hierarchy to be a little annoying and distracting from the joy of celebrating the natural rhythms of the seasons and life's cycles.²⁴⁶ For many, regardless of the battles over national organization, life in the grove went on as usual as the grove continued to investigate and explore the paths of Truth. With that quick reminder, let's first talk about some of the achievements the NRDNA and SDNA did together.

Druid Chronicles (Evolved)²⁴⁷

Most conflicts with Isaac were a result of his trying to stabilize some of the groups' vague self-definitions, which to many were the essence, fluidity and fortitude of Reformed Druidism. Now looking back, Isaac's earlier proposals could be seen as a great deal of noise and commotion to show where he was headed with his own brand of Druidism and to invite others

of like mind to make the jump and to go with him. It was reasonable for Isaac to have stayed around for a few years trying to give the RDNA and NRDNA that last push to bring it to a possible *evolutionary* progression. Unfortunately for Isaac, most Neo-Pagans were still very anarchic and liberty-intoxicated in the mid 70s. More members would have likely joined from Carleton if they had truly been more interested in Celtic religion and less oriented towards Asian and Christian religions. It is good to bear in mind that Neo-Paganism was (and still is) but a very tiny collection of religious systems with the amazing diversity of religious choices in America. As for the Neo-Pagans who disagreed with him, Isaac had to wait for the "Ten Year Gap" to close between his views and those of Neo-Pagans.

In the meantime, Isaac's industriousness contributed a very powerful anchor (or should I say noose?) of stability²⁴⁸ to the RDNA and NRDNA movements through his efforts to collect the early "scriptures," essays, historical trivia and reference lists considered reflective or important to the many branches of Reformed Druidism. The Carleton Druids were at first a bit suspicious that Isaac was going to become a "Druid Fundamentalist" and turn the original writings into inflexible canons of indoctrination. Rather than chancing this by leaving him alone, the Carleton Druids worked very closely with Isaac to keep the facts straight (especially about the RDNA's original purposes). One objection was in the name "Druid Chronicles (Evolved)" with the implication of "Evolved" being an improvement over an older form.²⁴⁹ They also feared that the history of Reformed Druidism would be forever filtered and interpreted through Isaac's writings ("To the victor goes the history books"), a fear that has proved to be not without grounds. This is something I've come to notice after my own efforts producing ARDA.

To their general relief, *The Druid Chronicles (Evolved)* was published with reasonable disclaimers of any "divine inspiration" or application to the original branch of the Reform, but the evolutionary bias towards Celtic paganism remained a sore point with the Carleton RDNA faction. But for the later NRDNA and SDNA, the DC(E) became their own compact version of the Carleton Archives (to which they had never had access). Very compact and densely crammed with facts, trivia and liturgies, DC(E) has proved an invaluable reference source for many of the surviving NRDNA groves. It also proved crucial in the revival of Carleton Druidism in 1986, when the Carleton Druid Archives had been misplaced. In fact, with that book there was hardly any more danger of a grove losing its roots from isolation, as long as they didn't take the book too seriously.

Druid Chronicler (DCr) and Pentalpha

Not to be confused with the *Druid Chronicles (Reformed or Evolved)*, the *Druid Chronicler*²⁵⁰ newsletter replaced the Berkeley Grove newsletter from 1977 to 1981, and continued many of the coordinating efforts of the short-lived PCoA. Under several different editors and networkers, the DCr maintained up-to-date addresses of ArchDruids and spread news on their grove's activities to each other. DCr also printed new additions to liturgies and announced new members of the Council of Dalon ap Landu, and later its subset, the Coalition Council of Dalon ap Landu (CoCoDal). I also believe that these issues were meant to be inserted into the *Druid Chronicles (Evolved)*, in order to keep DC(E) up-to-date and useful as a personal reference tool in the various branches. DCr was run by Joan Carruth, in Isaac's absences from the Berkeley Grove, from 1979-81, just as competently from all appearances. Isaac was on sabbatical during this period experimenting with a group called Pentalpha.

Pentalpha was the nickname of the Association for the Advancement of Aquarian Age Awareness. It was devised kind of life an umbrella organization for Neo-pagan organizations, although a large portion of its journal's subscribers and submitters were from the Druids. It also acted partly as an eclectic literary forum, to direct funds towards legal cases, and to explore the procedures for establishing the bare framework for making legal churches. A few divorces, relocations and finances eventually doomed the prolific project, but the lessons that Isaac and his small cadre of members learned, would benefit them greatly when ADF was being founded a few years later. Indeed, as we'll see, the lessons they learned were not easily transferred back into the Berkeley grove.

Drawing Down the Moon

When Margot Adlor's book, *Drawing Down the Moon*, came out in 1978, it caused quite a stir in the Neo-Pagan community. It is considered a historical landmark in the literature of the movement. Here was a finely written attempt to cover the wide spectrum of ideas and groups at a time when most encyclopedists were not yet listing them. For the Reformed Druids, it would forever enshrine the RDNA as the most known path "Celtic" path, but also put in the Play and Paradox chapter along with the Discordians, as a religion that espoused wry humor and *joy de vivre*. Naturally, the 1986 Edition focused more on the growth of ADF. Although Isaac's prominence in the Neo-pagan movement was never in question, but for this book, it is doubtful the RDNA would have been more than a footnote in the movement. However, after this publication, despite the flattering publicity, the movement began to experience a decline of membership and grove numbers. It is still probably the most widespread introduction to the RDNA in the general populace.

The Eclipse of Carleton: 1978-1984²⁵¹

It's important to note here, before continuing the analysis of the NRDNA vs. SDNA conflicts, that the early NRDNA groves led by the Arch-Druids from Carleton had all collapsed or were dropping out of the picture by 1978. The groves of Ann-Arbor and New York #2 had been abandoned by their founders, as somehow lacking that Carleton flavor. Larson left the Berkeley Grove while he was working with an Irish Entertainment group called "Clann Na Brocheta." In retrospect, Larson mused that if he had stayed around, he may have been able to smooth down some of the later problems. However, he also noted that it was time for him to explore other outlets, allow Joan more elbow room, and let the grove try out new slants. The ArchDruids of Stanford and Chicago experienced financial crises, core members moving away and personal difficulties that made a grove too much of a trouble to maintain. Eventually the SDNA Third Orders became the leaders of groves bearing the title NRDNA. So it came to be that the early NRDNA disappeared to be replaced by a mostly (but not exclusively) neo-pagan organization also called the NRDNA between the years 1977 and 1979.

The Carleton Grove experienced a lack of enthusiastic recruitment after Morrison's strong Archdruidy in 1976. The eclipse of Carleton Druidism in Grove form was partly a result of "burn-out" by those Carleton alumni who felt that Carleton's independence from "outside" control was pretty much established and also that the Carleton grove should now control its own destiny. I also suspect that Druidism had long since stopped being the only liberal religious outlet at Carleton. During the 70s, a stronger Unitarian presence developed, the Catholic and Protestant churches mellowed, and drug-induced mysticism had increased. Between 1980-2 there were no Third Order priests

present on the campus, just a few bewildered 1st and 2nd orders who didn't know what to do.

The Political Storm-Clouds gather in California (1978-1982)

It is worth reminding you that the initial anti-monotheism of Neo-Paganism of the early 70s never prevented non-Pagans from participating or (potentially) leading an NRDNA grove, except possibly in Isaac's grove or the Hassidic DNA of St. Louis. It's also worth mentioning again that many in the NRDNA groves were a long ways from solely relying upon Celtic sources.²⁵² Isaac had many other complaints, primarily organizational and they will be dealt with in the next Chapter of the Epistle.

What seemed on paper to be a rather thriving Druid community was already changing in 1979, a time when Isaac Bonewits left on a two year sabbatical and left Joan and Stefan in charge of the Mother Grove (which they quickly renamed the Berkeley grove again). The late 70's and early 80s was a time when inflation was hurting everybody's budget and most of the groves in California's later NRDNA and SDNA folded soon between 1979 and 1982. The Twin City Acorn Grove, St. Louis Arch Grove (HDNA), San Diego Tuatha Grove and Clan na Brocheta groves had already collapsed, within four years of their foundings.²⁵³ As mentioned before, most Neo-Pagans and Druids ran on a rather tight budget and the cost of getting groves together became increasingly difficult. Without the devoted net-working of Isaac, these groups slipped out of touch and later quietly passed away as they would have anyway, but without any noisy fanfare. This left the Berkeley Live Oak Grove, Los Angeles and Olympia Washington's Evergreen Grove and Greenwood Grove in the roll of active groves. All were pretty distant from each other and therefore unlikely to communicate too much during a time which was called "The Boring Times."²⁵⁴

The Death March on the Beach²⁵⁵

Joan Carruth had run the Berkeley Grove as a co-ArchDruid from 1977-79 with Isaac, assisting in a fluorescence of new liturgical patterns, and then as Arch Druid from 1979-1981 with a little help from Stefan McCaully (later of Hazelnut Grove). It appears that the Grove was running happily when Isaac returned in September 1981 and wished to regain his role as "ArchDruid Emeritus"²⁵⁶ of Berkeley. The election for Berkeley's officers was held after a particularly unsuccessful ritual, in which Joan endlessly led the grove members up and down a long beach looking for a good ritual site, while Druids collapsed from fatigue, anger and boredom.

Accounts vary greatly about what happened during the elections, but Joan and Isaac were contesting the title of Arch Druid, not too long over a personal dispute between the two members. It was a very tense and bitter election with Isaac promising drastic changes for Reformed Druidism if he was elected, based on his experimentations with Pentalpha. The first vote split evenly 6 to 6, but a second vote was held and it came out 7 to 5, in favor of Isaac. Now, Joan is rumored to have felt that Isaac had betrayed them by changing his vote and had voted for himself instead of voting for the other opponent, as was the tradition. Whether this is true or not; a lot of bad blood and anger was raised amongst the Berkleyites.

Joan, Stefan and Emmon split off from Isaac's Berkeley Grove (which promptly became "The SDNA Mother Grove" again) and formed the Live Oak Grove, also in Berkeley (and later holding services in Orinda). The Live Oak Grove of the NRDNA felt that Isaac's reforms were taking the Druids too far from what the initial Founders had planned it, a "Dis-organized

Religion."²⁵⁷ Live Oak Grove lasted for many years under Joan, then Larry, the Bob's Archdruidship, and finally under Emmon's caretaking. Emmon would publish The Druid Missalany newsletter and helped the grove to incorporate for a few years before dissolving. Greenwood Grove of Seattle and Hazelnut Grove remained staunchly independent of any association with the Mother Grove of Berkeley and are very active up to this day. Interestingly, the current NRDNA groves are far closer to the original RDNA liturgical format and customs than the present Carleton Druids. But, we'll discuss this in more detail in Chapter Six. For now let's turn our attention to the new project, ADF, of Isaac and his friends.



Figure 10 "The Druidess"



Figure 11 Yes, even back in the 18th Century, the Druids were dissing the Germans

Chapter Five: ADF & Keltria 1983-1996 The Branching of Modern Druidism

The Formation of Ar nDraiocht Fein

It is not my purpose here to give a detailed, complete history of the ADF, which could only come from a collaboration of several inner-members who would be intimately familiar with the development of events and people of the ADF. I can only hope to show some of the relationships and similarities/dissimilarities that exist between ADF and the N/RDNA. To do so will require that I talk a lot about Isaac, because of his major influence in both ADF and in the later years of the NRDNA, which makes him a good focal point for discussion of cross-overs and carryovers between the two groups. Also, because the focus of this epistle is the history of Reformed Druidism, most of the discussion of ADF will be in relation to the N/RDNA, instead of with the Neo-Pagan community, which was indeed the major audience to which ADF catered. The history of Neo-Pagan organizational attempts and ADF's role in debating and exploring Neo-Pagan issues will have to be written by another person.

The reason for Isaac's prominence in the history of the RDNA was his penchant for trying to put order and stability into the organizational structure of Reformed Druidism. Empire builders have always attracted the lion's share of attention from the historians, more so than the simpler histories of those who are conquered or incorporated. Isaac also printed/published a lot of letters and magazines on the debates which have survived to produce a historical record naturally inclined to favor/emphasize his role. Whereas many of the terms and/or structures now used in ADF originally were used in the NRDNA; such as proto-grove, council of ArchDruids/senior druids and others; most of them disappeared from prominence and general use in the NRDNA after Isaac's departure. In effect, they went with him to be used with a new group that was better oriented and appreciative of their potential applicability. While Reformed Druidism was not quite chaos or anarchy incarnated, I like the image of ADF emerging from Reformed Druidism just as Order emerges from Chaos in the genesis myths of many religions.

The Beginnings of Á r nDraíocht Féin (Dec. 1981)

During Isaac's sabbatical from 1979 to 1981 and dabbling with Pentalpha, he was putting together the foundations for a new Druid Organization that would be more stable, legally-recognizable and coherent than the "anarchy" and "ridiculous egalitarianism" of the RDNA and NRDNA. The major problem with the Reformed Druids, in Isaac's and other people's eyes, was its obstinate refusal to allocate power to the leaders and its having a system that defeated any "official" attempt to improve the coherency and/or functionality into a national organization. Isaac's liturgical or organizational changes from scholarly study

of Celtic and/or Proto-Indo-European cultures would forever contend with the RDNA's multiple (and possibly more enticing) systems of beliefs from around the world and from the members' own devising. The RDNA, as a whole, would never resemble authentic, historical Druidism.

At best, Isaac could have formed and shaped one Reformed Druid grove in his vision and then slowly found others. However, each member of those new groves would be constantly reminded by the Druid Chronicles and Reformed Druid correspondence that they could do anything and still be a Reformed Druid, regardless of what Isaac or any pseudo-governing body said to them. It was like sand slipping out of Isaac's fingers or King Canute trying to stop the tides. The RDNA and NRDNA would always be a loose federation of autonomous groves operating in effective isolation; never a complex national organization.

I don't mean to imply that Isaac wished to tightly control people's lives, but that he did wish to create a functional organization that would reciprocate and appreciate his (and other's) interests and suggestions. He wanted a group that would unearth the lost ways and beliefs of the Proto-Indo-European religion, keep itself from lapsing into decrepitude and be able to share that knowledge with the world. He wanted a group that he could be sure would be around 30 years from now. For Isaac to have continued to convert Reformed Druidism into that tool would have been like using fingernail-clippers to hammer in a nail.

One thing is for sure, Isaac gave it the best attempt possible. After all there were many potential recruits within Reformed Druidism, and some did join him in his new projects; but for the most part, he left the Reformed Druid organization behind that he had so carefully maintained, and it slowly decayed into happy, anarchic simplicity. In fact, it is still happily decaying; with occasional growth spurts. As for Isaac, he was to develop new alliances and friendships with people even more like himself.

Reasons for Isaac's "Departure"

Why did Isaac "leave?"²⁶³ Legal status had a lot to do with why Isaac left; and respect for the group's concerns makes up the rest. One of the many weakness of the Neo-Pagan movement was the fact that most of them were not recognized as religious organizations and/or lacked the respect that "established" religions had from governmental and community authorities. As a result, there was a latent weakness for oppressors of Neo-Paganism to downplay the convictions of these tiny groups and mis-present them as "cults." Isaac had had his fill of this bias in the courts, when he was running the Aquarian Anti-Defamation League in the mid-70s. Isaac wanted a Neo-Pagan religious group that could appear to function as smoothly and bureaucratically as the "big boys," preferably a Druidic group, and yet still retain the spontaneity and personal freedom of Neo-Paganism. He wanted a group that could act as a role-model for other Neo-Pagans and/or as an umbrella organization for other Celtic/Druidic groups with similar goals. Reformed Druidism was definitely ecumenical enough for his goal, but perhaps a bit too disorganized. Despite full-hearted attempts to "correct" them, the Reformed Druids proved to be incapable of meeting certain basic standards that he felt were necessary for achieving the nebulous (but vitally important) definitional status of a "stable religious organization."

On casual observation, there would seem to be no carry-overs from Reformed Druidism to ADF except the title "Druid," the Waters-of-Life, an eclectic sense of humor, the Druid Sigil and Isaac himself; but a more careful examination proves otherwise. Without his experiences in the "anarchic" RDNA proving grounds, he would have probably made many (more) blunders in setting up a group formed in the way that he wished.

In a sense the RDNA provided a very accurate model for what Isaac wished to avoid in his new group and also what he did want included in his new group. I recommend a close study of the ADF for those curious about the RDNA, because what the ADF **did** do sheds a lot of light on what the RDNA **couldn't (or wouldn't)** do. Isaac (and others) was familiar from his past experiences (with AADL and Pentalpha) with the criteria needed for a religion to be considered "respectable" in a court of law. These "failures" on the part of the RDNA, and similar Neo-Pagan anarchic groups, were carefully "corrected" when planning the new Druid Organization; and they were primarily:

1. Stable, effective, strong central organization.
2. Effective Clergy training and the controlled appointment of Leadership
3. "Defrocking" and "excommunication"
4. Concerted unity in court cases
5. Financial stability.
6. Capability of steady expansion without lessening central power.
7. Official dogma and an ability to speak for a group and make official alliances.
8. Willingness to ally exclusively to Neo-Paganism.
9. Willingness to adapt and change to accommodate scholarly facts on Indo-Euro religion
10. Respect for the group's goals.

All of these goals are carefully tied into each other, with one leading string leading to another. We shall therefore start with one of these strings in the Gordion Knot.

1. Stable, Effective, Strong Central Organization

Despite Isaac's attempts at removing the chairmanship of the Council of Dalon Ap Landu from Carleton's, and later a Provisional Council of Archdruids; most of the Reformed Druids (including the NRDNA) were still roughly allied to the Council of Dalon Ap Landu as governed by Carleton. The Coalition Council of DAL did not last long after Joan's departure in 1982. Because of Carleton's rapid and total membership turn-over and eternally young Archdruids (always under 23 years old); there was little hope of "mature" and bureaucratically competent leadership for the Council. Besides this, the Carleton Archdruid (and a major chunk of the Carleton alumni members of the Council) was, for a long time, poorly cognizant of the religious beliefs and needs of the Neo-Pagan members of the Reformed Druids living on the West Coast and elsewhere.

One of the first things Isaac did was to become life-long, supreme Archdruid of the whole ADF organization (leaders of individual groves are "senior druids") until the mid 1990s.²⁶⁴ As you can read in the ADF By-laws in the Part Four of ARDA, the Archdruid was given rather extensive powers for the appointment of bureaucrats, to influence legislation and to veto or to remove problems. The office of Archdruid becomes accountable to electionary influence beginning with his successor, but Isaac is sure to massively influence the formative years of the group's history. As you can further read, there are elected positions to the legislative offices; the ability to vote is not a right of office like in the RDNA priesthood, it's a privilege granted to the general members (except when some are selected as in the board of Trustees). This privilege is not only granted, but it's effectiveness increases with the length of time you stay active in legislation; no more sitting back and occasionally vetoing every 10 years or so. Every year in consistent attendance at legislating increased the number of votes you could cast; which implies that experience in ADF affairs makes you a more competent voter than a newcomer. This position has its advantages and drawbacks, of course.

Furthermore in the voting on issues affecting all groves, the decisions are made by quorums, not unanimity like in the RDNA.

The wishes of the majority override those of the minority. In the RDNA, the rules affecting the entire collective of groves which were passed by the unanimity of the Third Orders were effective on the non-thirds; the custom of a groves' constitution were by quorums. That small change from unanimity to quorum on the organizational level makes all the changes possible for ADF to travel a different fate from the RDNA. The ADF can change more easily on the total-organizational level than the RDNA; which in all reality could only change on the Grove-level. If Isaac could have changed that one tradition of unanimity in the RDNA, he could have stayed in the RDNA and slowly transformed it into the ADF. Needless to say, this was one of the things the RDNA and NRDNA were most reluctant to change.

Once that single change was made, it naturally follows to allocate the collective power and *endorsing capability* of the group by appointing bodies of member like Boards of Trustees, Councils of Lore and Advisory Councils. I do not wish to go into the deep checks-and-balances of his group. The critical change from the RDNA had already been made and it would be belaboring the point to describe further deviations from the organized anarchy of the RDNA's structure. In effect, he had created a constitutional monarchy, as he will freely admit, much like Britain's government which blends autocracy and representation democracy.

2. Effective clergy training and appointment of leaders

Once the issue of legislating by the majority's wishes had been conceded (i.e. that people need to be instructed and led by the (hopefully) better-informed-majority's wishes), the next issue to deal with was appointing good leaders to avoid tyranny and promote the group's goals. The placement of term-of-office limits helps greatly, so is the need for election, but some power is always taken away from the individuals. Unlike secular authorities, religious authorities (excepting Cults) can not hope to "control" the lives of its members, if the congregation member does not wish to be controlled. There is always the option of quitting, both in ADF and/or mainstream religions.

The RDNA is not entirely "innocent" of the danger of Priests potentially dominating the religious congregation, because the Third Order could technically impose oppressive dogma, but the tradition of unanimity hinders such possible imposition on an organizational level, although it could easily happen on the local level. Such an event could occur by the RDNA's priest being given greater powers in the grove's constitution or by "levering" techniques, like the decision of the Archdruid or any priest refusing to grant initiation or refusing to hold services. No special knowledge or conditions were required of the initiate in the Reform, it was on the honor system, if you felt ready then you were probably ready. So in effect the RDNA had no control or educational requirement on who became its leaders (i.e. the Third Order) and no need to worry, because the Third Order had no real, effective power or authority to wield. It was very cleverly planned that way. In fact within the RDNA, many priests tell me that the aspirants to and attainers of the Third Order could very well themselves be considered failures at Druidism, because they seek to take part in "organization." The only center of higher training was perhaps, Carleton College itself, in a liberal-arts education.

The RDNA's system would not satisfy the ADF, which wished a clergy that resembled the clerical training efforts of the "mainstream" religions. A well-educated clergy would go a long way in currying respect from monotheistic clerical faiths. Indeed, one of the cornerstones of the ADF is its seminary program, which is quite impressively organized on paper in comparison with other Neo-Pagan systems currently out there. It is designed to produce a group of informed, "liberal arts-ish" trained clergy by the end of its 13 track program. Each of the 13 tracks is a different area of learning including:

1. Physical Health and Survival, 2. Therapy and Counseling, 3. Communication, 4. Magic and Divination, 5. History and Social Sciences, 6. Natural Sciences, 7. Movement awareness and Discipline, 8. Artistic and Bardic Skills, 9. Drama and Liturgy, 10. Philosophy and Scholarship, 11. Comparative Religion and Mythology, 12. Mysticism and Altered States of Consciousness, 13. Human Services Administration.

Each track has five degrees/levels of increasing "competence" in that area of knowledge, called "circles." When a candidate has read/studied/practiced the suggested materials in that track, and wishes to be accredited for completing a "circle," they take a test/exam/demonstration to show competency. When one has completed 1st Circle competency in each of the thirteen tracks, one becomes a full second circle ADF druid. It is, of course, quite possible to be third circle competent in History while lagging behind in 1st circle with the other 12 tracks, in which case you'd still be a 1st circle Druid. However, the minimum competency to be a priest in the ADF is to have completed the 2nd circle competency requirements in each track and therefore be working on (at least) the 3rd circle competency for each of the thirteen tracks. The image is of circles within circles (like rings in a tree) with greater proven competency allowing further progression to more inner circles; and correspondingly greater responsibilities and power. A 3rd circle status is roughly equivalent to a B.A., a 4th circle to a M.A. and a 5th circle to a Ph.D. It is interesting to note that the circle-status does not affect, at least now, the right to fill the roles of offices of the Mother Grove's administration or the local roles. This is in itself very interesting. This is coupled with the fact that no one need be in the seminary program to be an ADF member, participation in the seminary program (although encouraged, at least for self-development) is purely optional.

Although this concept of a seminary drew a lot of fire initially from the Neo-Pagan community as a whole; being counter to the free-spirit of Neo-paganism, one-up-man-ship, etc.; since then many have begun to pay greater attention to training regimens.

3. Ability to Defrock and Excommunicate

Closely allied with its clerical training program was ADF's desire to remove troublesome members from its priesthood and general membership, when the necessity arises. Defrocking and excommunication are traditional methods used by Organized Religions to maintain a group's definitional identity boundary when all other forms of persuasion have failed. They are used to protect the group from the development of serious factionalization (though it doesn't always work).

In the RDNA there was **no** known method for defrocking or excommunication officially available. Any action would have to be done by an "unofficial" shunning of the problematic person; i.e. not going to that Priest's rituals or everybody just avoiding that person. However, "officially," that person would still be entitled to retain their RDNA "priesthood" and "order of achievement." If they were already a 3rd Order they could still officially found a new RDNA grove, even if they were considered to be demon-spawn. This defect never actually caused a real problem to the RDNA, but it was a potentially devastating problem in Isaac's eyes. Hypothetically, what if someone came into the ADF grove with a bunch of really strange, dangerous ideas and/or seriously broke the U.S. law? Without excommunication, there would be no way for ADF to disavow the group's connection with that person except to say that each person

was following their own way and no one can speak for the beliefs of others in the group. That might work for the RDNA, but not for ADF which had a destiny to preserve. It was far better, in Isaac's eyes, to remove any group connections with that person by "defrocking" them and/or excommunicating them.

The RDNA tried not to worry enough about the group's survival and forget the rights of the individual. The ADF is self-consciously establishing a right for the group to survive, and it's an interesting choice of potential priorities. This has the advantage of not having to start from scratch with one's Public Relations after a scandal, assuming one is concerned about Public Relations. Each ADF grove has to toe the line with new national changes or it will lose the benefits of participation in the national group. These included a loss of ADF allegiance status (which implies a "loss of name and identity" of that group), a loss of legal protection and supportive advice and/or moneys from the central powers-that-be. It's uncertain how often this happened, but news is infrequent.

4. Concerted unity in court cases:

ADF wants to legally protect and empower its members to practice and publicly-affirm their religious beliefs. One of the main reasons that people joined the ADF is for a legal status for their church. It is expensive, paper-consuming and difficult for each small group to independently obtain/maintain/prove all the requirements of a religious organization in the eyes of the IRS and the public Courts. It is far cheaper for one group (i.e. the ADF Mother Grove, consisting of all the officers of the organization) to attain religious organizational status and then give out franchises to the individual groves that are sort of huddling under its umbrella. Thereby the poorer groves/members have a better shot of gaining a victory in the courts.

In the RDNA, the original Carleton Grove *could* have performed all of these legal tasks for itself; however expansion soon exposed a problem to a possible extension of legal protection: deep-seated apathy towards making themselves appear organized enough to survive an "inspection" by the government. The unusual precedent to this was the Smiley incident; whereupon a few members of the Council backed-up a member currently active in a Grove distinct from the Carleton Grove. The reason such legal protection was not possible in the RDNA was because nobody wanted to pay membership fees to cover the costs of such applications or concerted legal action. Each new grove meant more people for the already over-burdened Archdruid of Carleton; who was trying to survive a rigorous educational program and maintain a national organization. The fraternal aid in the Smiley case was relatively cheap (mere postage costs) and was therefore feasible; hiring a lawyer for Smiley on RDNA funds would have been impossible. Smiley would have had to hire his own lawyer to defend his religious beliefs, with testimonial backing from the other Council members. Isaac didn't want the little ADF guy out there on his/her own.

Isaac was familiar, from his association with AADL, that court cases are a possible hazard for any Neo-Pagan organization. There had to be a clear representative of the organization to arrange a defense (or mount a prosecution). A representative for the group was necessary for the group in legal cases and for flushing out frauds from the group. In 1989, ADF worked in conjunction with other Neo-Pagan groups to expose the nefarious activities of the Divine Circle of the Sacred Grove. DCSG's leader was misrepresenting herself as having 3rd circle ADF credentials.

5. Financial Stability

Paying for the costs of running the bureaucracy, legal aid in court cases, educational grading of the seminary tracks and to publish/mail periodicals or the new by-laws for the organization costs money. Lots of money. With money comes the threat of

corruption, which requires more bureaucracy to self-police itself. You see the viscous cycle now. However, financial compensation for such activities prevents financial "burnout" by goodwill supporters.

The RDNA has never had much to do with enforcing money collection. A tradition of passing the hat was the best method they came up with. The one rule regarding money was that it was required for all Third Order Druids to pay compensation for the postage of the up-date (or "State of the Grove") mailings that the Archdruid of Carleton sent out upon retiring. If people wanted it, they paid for it; and if they didn't want it, they didn't pay for it. It should be noted that this practice is common among Neo-Pagan groups. It will be interesting to see how direct financial support from Carleton College will affect the internal dynamics of the Druids.

Isaac was presenting a valid gripe that it costs money to run an organization within the N/RDNA, and that he was tired of paying for all of it; however many did not wish the organization, and so they didn't pay. The arguments on both sides have many pros and cons which the reader can argue out for her/himself. The result was that Isaac required membership dues on both individual membership and a due for the groves themselves to be franchised. There was considerable debate but it has passed, and no one has gotten rich off it, so it seems to be working out. It is the hope of ADF to have its clergy's efforts compensated with money/services in the future. Despite ADF's growth over the years, we're still talking only about a budget of several thousand dollars.

6. Capability of Steady expansion without lessening central power/importance

It is inevitable, that the physical distance between people will weaken the bond of friendship/allegiance. Distance is not so potent a force of division today as it used to be because of technological achievements that make mass-communication cheaper and easier to access. Photocopy machines, computer publishing, multi-line phone communication and e-mail have greatly improved the organizational skills of smaller dispersed organizations.

The RDNA's apparent apathy (or respect for autonomy) towards its other groves and suspicion of the motives of organized religions, inhibited any initiative towards central government. While many Reformed Druids were happy at the founding of new Groves, and might even offer friendly advice if asked for it, they kept a respectful distance from involvement. The center of attention for each grove, or solitary Druid, was itself. The NRDNA of the Bay Area was blessed (cursed?) with lots of groves within a close geo-physical distance so that physical visits were practical and intergrove-relations and shared rituals were common; permitting shared goals and activities that could breach autonomic tendencies. The "Mother Grove" newsletter of the SDNA and various succeeding magazines disseminated coordinating news and discussed issues important to various members.

The ADF was begun with the intention of operating on both the local level **and** the National level from the beginning. ADF was ready to be a really big family and several devices from Isaac's NRDNA days were used to foster a national level of group-unity. The most obvious is the Annual ADF festival, usually held in conjunction with other groups for cost/fun reasons, in which ADF issues are debated and voted upon. Elections for some offices are also held and just plain physical meetings between members is made possible, so that trans-grove friendship are made more possible. For those not able to attend the meetings for financial or obligatory reasons, electronic communication or proxy voting are now possible. Most of the Mother Grove's

councils meet on a more frequent and regular basis (in person, proxy or electronically) to snip problems in the bud.

This sense of inter-Grove connections is increased by a Council of Senior Druids. A Senior Druid of the ADF is in a job similar to that of an Arch-Druid of the N/RDNA; s/he is in charge of leading a grove's rituals and is technically the leader. They are called Senior Druids because there can only be **one** Archdruid in ADF at a time; which is more historically correct (at least in Gaul/France, where the only mention of the title existed). The Council of Senior Druids' purpose of establishing inter-communication between the Grove's leaders is identical to the original purpose of the Provisional Council of Archdruids in Reformed Druidism; including making some general statements and minor legislation (most of which was never officially completed in the N/RDNA).

The "Druid's Progress" is the national journal of ADF and brings the academic, liturgical and artistic achievements of far-spread grove members together for display and shared knowledge. In some aspects, DP's importance has decreased as local newsletters grow among Groves, but DP will probably remain for those seeking a wider audience. This magazine was recently replaced by "Oak Leaves". "The News from the Mother Grove" acts to disseminate business news of the ADF organization and share addresses/locations of officers and groves. The role of a central journal and a more frequent newsletter holding together a group is a general phenomenon of Neo-Paganism and it was preceded in the N/RDNA by the Druid Chronicler and Penta-Alpha magazines also begun by Isaac Bonewits (and others). Local grove publications are exchanged between groves for a similar purpose and thrive on a small scale.

Traveling visits by the Archdruid, usually while going to present a lecture at a nearby convention, are another method of keeping abreast of local development of the many groves in the ADF. However, in recent years, these tours have declined due to Isaac's failing health. ADF groves are also encouraged to visit neighboring groves once in a while, when possible. The last area of intergrove activity would be on computer bulletin board conferences. The cheap, instant communication that this provides for isolated solitary members may be enough to swell ADF's ranks, and advertise it more widely.

7. Official dogma and ability to speak for a group and thereby make alliances¹

As we've stated before, because the Council of Dalon ap Landu was likely to deadlock on a decisive vote of support for any issue, the individual RDNA member was officially incapable of speaking for the group, being appointed to act as its ambassador, or making an alliance of between the entire RDNA organization and other groups. They could "pretend" to do such things or act informally on the wishes of individuals, but could not represent the RDNA as a whole. This weakened the RDNA's potential "clout" as an organization, since it has trouble sending group-wide ambassadors, making alliances or being represented in court.

ADF, in contrast, has frequently sent ambassadors to religious conventions, set up public relations committees, produced official literature, appointed lawyers and done everything necessary to define itself as a recognizable entity.

8. Willingness to ally exclusively to Neo-Paganism.

Now the Carleton RDNA and it's RDNA offshoots were generally open to the public in a cautious manner, mainly as a

result of its exploration of world religions which, if a bit odd (Asian, Atheism and Middle-Eastern), were not met with as much suspicion as Occultism and Wicca. The truth was, the RDNA and NRDNA (as a whole) weren't too picky about where they looked to find religious truth; and Neo-Paganism was merely one option among hundreds of possibilities. While the NRDNA steadily grew to have a preference for Neo-Pagan members and inspiration, it was like the RDNA in that it was never exclusionary towards non-pagans. All were welcome, pending good behavior, even into the Third Order or higher! However, Isaac's SDNA (and the HDNA subset) was very clear in its Neo-Pagan allegiance, especially in the criteria needed for entry into the Third Order.

Isaac's attitude carried over into the ADF, where one must pledge to be a Neo-Pagan/Wiccan/etc.(preferably polytheistic instead of duotheistic or even feminine monotheistic) to fulfill any "official" leadership in the organization. He wanted the ADF to be squarely in the camp of Neo-Paganism. Members partaking in the Study tracks who wished to be accredited as clergy (and not just studying for the enjoyment) would also have to ally to Neo-Paganism. While this requirement was nothing to most of its prospective members, it was a definite egalitarian (non-pagans aren't welcome and certain types of Pagans were only cautiously accepted), and while no tears will be shed by ADF over it, it is one of the greatest changes from the RDNA. However, as far as the Neo-Pagan Community was concerned, ADF was a very ecumenical religious organization indeed. One interesting custom of the ADF was to allow its own members to practice in other Neo-Pagan religions at the same time.

9. Willingness to change to accommodate scholarly facts on Indo-European religion.

Closely linked with point 8 is ADF's choice of which cultures were to be the official inspiration of the group. The RDNA had shown from it's very founding year, with the debate over choosing what to sacrifice, that it wasn't going to change it's organization to meet historical realities of the ancient Druids. The NRDNA groves under Larson and Bonewits and a few other Archdruids were more willing to model the liturgies, songs and officers to match the known historical facts from one or two ancient religions (including Norse, Celtic and paleo-Hebraic religion), but they usually remained close to the Order of Worship's general plan. Despite some specialization, members within those groves continued to draw upon diverse sources of inspiration.

ADF was founded to research and recreate the original religion of the ancestors of the Indo-European family-tree. ADF was dealing with a pretty broad selection of cultures to work backwards from; including Celtic, Scando-Germanic, pre-classical Greco-Roman, Slavic, ancient Hindu, etc. (and a specially permitted addition, Native American). Truly diverse, but it is still exclusionary of many African-originated religions, Eastern Asian religion, Greco-Roman, Islamic, Meso-Pagan and Judeo-Christianity, not to mention Modern Wicca and Science-Fiction inspired cultures. The ADF is not racist, but they wish to retain a focus. Members are welcome to practice privately any religion they wish and learn from whatever source they wish, but for the purpose of official public ADF rituals only materials pertaining to Indo-European cultures will be considered relevant.

10. Respect for the group's goals

A kind of catch-all conclusion, but it is a point that underlies all of the previous 9 points. The RDNA had a respectful wariness and suspicion about a religious group taking upon itself more tasks, powers of coercion, dogma, sanctity and self-importance than was safe/helpful for the rights/purposes of the individual to be able to pursue and express their religious truth

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with their siblings. From this stems the Reformed Druid penchant for "anarchy" (as it is called in some people's opinions).

While a certain amount of humor and self-mocking has and will continue in the ADF, it has set forward serious goals that it hopes to accomplish, as a group.

Carryovers from the Reformed Druids

It's hard to say what Isaac borrowed from the RDNA since many of the organizational structures that carried over from it were devised and used mostly by himself in the first place. But, assuming that he devised these ideas and implemented them with the help of other Reformed Druids, they can be said to belong in part to Reformed Druidism.

By far, the most apparent carryover was the symbol of Reformed Druidism itself, the Druid Sigil. Perhaps not so significant to the general reader, but I consider it a powerful identifying symbol of shared siblinghood between ADF and Reformed Druidism, sort of like South Carolina and Nebraska both having the US flag flying in front of their public schools. The Druid Sigil has expanded from its merely RDNA-affiliation into a grander role as a symbol of Druidism in general. This importance as a pan-Druidical banner was increased further by the Henge of Keltria's adoption of the Druid Sigil as one of its symbols of identification. ADF also adopted a unique symbol for its own. It looks like a stump which has axe-marks upon it and one small oak branch growing anew from it. Each year they enlarge the branch, adding more leaves and girth. The roots of the symbol are knotted in a Celtic interlace and symbolize how Celtic Druidry has its roots in a pan-indo-european form of religion.²⁶⁵

The Waters of Life and some of the questions of the Catechism of the Waters and general structure from the 1977-1980 NRDNA liturgies are noticeable liturgical carryover from the Reform. The initial services of ADF were very similar to the Order of Worship, but with succeeding years, more and more elements disappear until only the Waters remain. They meet outdoors in groves, when possible, like the Reform. The office of Preceptor in the ADF has no liturgical role and is a mere paper-pushing official now.

Finally, The ADF is pursuing a proto-Indo-European system, which looks quite eclectic compared to mono-cultural Welsh or Irish Druid organizations that have appeared over the years. I see this as a slight narrowing of the broad search employed in the NRDNA for truth. That and the caveat that it must be adjusted slightly for modern sensibilities.

Milestones in ADF

As an outsider, with a limited study of ADF, I can only paint a few brushstrokes, whose details must be filled in by someone more familiar with the group's transformations.

Structurally, it began vaguely around 1983, but definitely solidified in 1984, the magazine "Druid's Progress" first came out. The Article of Association were passed in either 1986 or 1987, with the first board of regents holding the meeting on a waterbed, reportedly. Sometime between 1989 and 1991, they incorporated and soon thereafter were granted tax-free status as a charitable religious organization by the I.R.S. and the powers that be.

In regards to size, the organization seems to have quickly reached a size of a few dozen groves and protogroves, spreading mostly in the liberal regions of the East and West coasts and Ohio river valley. Due-paying membership has generally hovered between four to eight hundred members, making them certainly one of the larger Druid groups in the world, but still dwarfed by the century old fraternal movements and the rise of giants like the

Order of Bards Ovates and Druids; which now has established several groves in America, Canada, Europe and Australia now.

Due to its tighter identity, clearer lines of leadership, legal status and sense of mission, ADF has been prominent in attending interfaith religious conferences, such as the 1993 World Parliament of Religions, pagan festivals, the 30th Anniversary of Modern Druidism, etc. It also sent out circulars to the Neopagan communities about perceived lack of discussion on community issues and spreading news of the possible charlatans. In order to get its message out, ADF has produced an array of paper and digital publications over the years.

Organizationally, there have been several editions of ADF Grove Organizer's Handbook, ADF Study Manuals, ADF Member's Guides, Liturgical Handbooks, and some magazines. The Druid's Progress magazine lasted about ten years from 1984-1994, fitfully producing about one or two issues every year, while News from the Mother Grove and local Grove publications came out more frequently with current news. DP was a mixture of bardic materials, Indo-European comparative research, and new liturgical and organizational material. From 1997 to the present, the Oak Leaves publication has more closely approached a regular 2 or 3 issues a year, in much the same format, under different management. Minor financial problems and changing editorships over the years has made it difficult to establish continuity, although computerized editing has definitely made an improved product and simpler to organize.

The ADF Study Program caused a big splash in the mid-80s in the Neo-Pagan community. Although training programs, guided readings, and apprenticeships had happened before, none was as academically oriented, much like a seminary-by-mail course of studies. Hundreds of the members, and interested outside parties have enrolled over the years; and doubtlessly has influenced other groups to establish more training materials for its leadership and general membership. The program's apparent flaw was no so much in the choice of the materials or design, but the difficulty of enrolling enough competent graders to handle the onslaught of materials and correspondence than ensued. As a result, the program has occasionally closed and restarted over the years, and some members have been embittered, . Some Druids from other groups have been reticent to join ADF, from the feeling of having to start "from the bottom again," but most have responded favorably to the program.

In the mid 90s, ADF finally began to bring members into the Third Circle and full status as ordained clergy, perhaps a handful by now. And some of these members have also replaced Isaac Bonewits, not long after his illness became severe, as the Arch Druid of the overall ADF organization for about eight years now, in a smooth transition of power, because "it was about time for a new voice."

Considering the heavy number of computer professionals in the Neo-pagan movement, it is not surprising that ADF was one of the first Druid organizations to establish a web-site (www.adf.org) in the mid-90s, a year or so before the RDNA site (which was 1995), and has carefully added more and more resources, anchoring the community in ways far cheaper than the paper publications. Isaac established his own site (www.neopagan.net) after his retirement from the ADF Archdruidcy, and it also has played a prominent role in the Neopagan community. In fact, although dwarfed by some of the Neopagan and Wiccan organizations, it has been a sizable player in the Druid subset of the community, with an influence out of proportion to its size. Perhaps, it would be larger, if it wasn't shedding so many members, who are breaking off into new organizations, but that is not uncommon with larger Neopagan organizations.

ADF Spin-off Organizations

Just as ADF took the parts of the Reform it liked and left the rest, so too have groups split off from ADF to form new Druid groups over the years. Each group has adopted different influences and the connections may seem tenuous, but as Daniel Hansen says in his book, *American Druidism: A Guide to American Druid Groups*, we all live in America, we're all modern, we lack definitive links to Europe, and everybody lumps us together anyway. I like to think of all these Druid groups as part of the family of American Druidism.

The analogy is that the original RDNA is the parent; the NRDNA, SDNA, HDNA and ZDNA are its children; ADF is its grandchild; Shadowpath, Henge of Keltria, Druidactios, DCSG and Primitive Celtic Church are its great grandchildren; and American Druidic Church would be its great great grandchild. Of course, Missionary Order of the Celtic Cross (Reformed Druidic Wicca) and Order of Mithril Star have just married into the RDNA family, so we'll see how they fit in. It should be remembered that like a family tree, the RDNA "blood" has a thinner concentration in each generation. But since the current Carleton Grove has had 36 successive Archdruids, it may be fairer to call the current Carleton Grove to be a 36th Grandchild of the original grove and therefore something like a 23rd cousin of ADF (and a couple places removed)? Maybe the analogy doesn't work very well, eh?

I will describe each group rather briefly, because Daniel Hansen's book, "American Druidism" does the cataloguing job well enough so I will not have to duplicate his efforts. We have materials in the Druid Archives from these groups, which you are welcome to come and inspect.

Shadow Path Grove, mid 1980s

This was one of the first Druid Groups to break off from ADF in the mid 80s and their one grove hails from Connecticut. They broke off because they did not wish to have public rituals. They continue to use ADF ritual in private. It is believed to have gone inactive by 1993.

The Henge of Keltria, 1987

Keltria is by far the largest of the groups to break off from ADF, taking a good part of the mid-western ADF Druids with them in 1988 (and most of their membership and groves are still in the middle-US). Led initially by Patricia and Tony Taylor, they wished to stop ADF's pan-Indo-European focus and focus squarely (or is that triangularly?) upon Celtic Druidism. They incorporated in the early 90s, not too long after ADF, and have regularly updated their By-Laws. No offshoots have formed, to my knowledge.

They also sought to the public nature of the group, orienting into an initiatory tribal format, start their own training program, have more responsible financing, and publish their a journal (called Keltria) on a regular time schedule (unlike ADF's erratic publishings) until the late 90s. They made their headquarters in Minneapolis, which is interestingly only a short drive from Carleton, although it has recently relocated inquiries to West Virginia. Serpent Stone Journal, also only lasted a few years, but a recent update on the Liturgical book went well, with their unique vervain and mistletoe rites. Since then, however the "Henge Happenings" has been published on-line and is almost as detailed and very well edited.

An initially strong Wiccan flavor has diminished over the years. The Henge of Keltria is almost the same size as ADF and both groups have a large overlap of membership. Keltria has kept the Druid Sigil and added the three rays of Awen also. Keltria has a five circle program similar to ADF, but with far less essay-

writing. Never expanding past a few hundred, it continues to occasionally interact with the Carleton Grove over the years.

Numbers have dropped a little over the years, but their group still has annual gatherings in the summer in the Great Lake region that are well attended. In the late 90s, Taylor & co. stepped down from leadership, and new leadership rose to fill the vacuum, including the very talented Wren. However, although much more history has happened with Keltria, I will have to defer until I have a chance to do interviews and carefully peruse the literature.

Uxello-Druidactios, 1988

This was a Gaulish oriented group. It is a little more difficult to understand how Druidactios is part of the American Druid family. Druidactios was founded by Tadhg MacCrossan (Tom Cross) in 1988 after a few years in the Post Oak Proto-Grove of the NRDNA, then a very short stint in ADF, to study its organizational patterns and literature. His well published book "The Sacred Cauldron: Secrets of the Druid" is considered to be a handbook for starting a Druidactios touta (grove). MacCrossan has spent most of the years since writing poison-pen letters about the deficiencies of other Druid Organizations; in particular that they are "infected" with Neo-Pagan clap-trap and Wiccan influences. Most Druids classify Druidactios as "Meso-Pagan" (and it has many connections with the Continental organizations), similar to the original RDNA in that the group does not consider itself pagan. The group was currently in the process of fragmenting into four new groups at the time of ARDA's first publishing in 1996. Since then it has fallen apart, and Tom has reputedly decided to start up a new strain of Celtic Christianity in the Dallas Texas area.

Divine Circle of the Sacred Grove, 1991

This group has some nefarious elements, primarily Janette Copeland, and was trying to attract members to increase its profits. It attempted to use "A Druid Fellowship," which belongs to ADF, in its name but it quit in 1992. DCotSG then claimed phony ADF credentials. The group came under tax-scrutiny and disappeared from the Twin City area. The group moved to Arizona and deals mostly in workshops and herbs now. The remnants of the group from that incident formed a new group, The American Druidic Church.

American Druidic Church, 1992

Jay Tibbles and Patricia Fields founded this spin off from Divine Circle of Sacred Grove and have been relying heavily upon proffered help from ADF and OBOD (Order of Bards Ovates and Druids). They were working out their own customs, myths, newsletters and a training program, but the group did not last more than five years. This group appears to have disbanded.

Primitive Celtic Church, 1992

This grove, like Keltria, broke off to spend more time focusing upon the Celtic aspects of Druidism. Like the DCotSG, they also hail from the Seattle area where they operated a small grove of 4-8 people. One of their plans was to build a small Druidic village on some private land. Recent gossip claims that they have disbanded, but they opened a webpage and seem to be in operation, perhaps on a smaller scale.

Reformed Druidic Wicca 1985?

This group has a mysterious origin, perhaps a splinter off a half-hearted attempt to start a NRDNA Protogrove, or possibly even an ADF Protogrove in the mid-1980s. Records are rather fuzzy. The rumor is that somebody came from Colorado to the Oklahoma region and founded the group. The organization as a whole, with a handful of groves, has remained between ten and fifty members up to the recent years. As material become available I will write more about them. They renamed themselves

Missionary Order of the Celtic Cross (delightfully acronymed MOCC) and are apparently setting up off-shoots groves, building on-line conferences, and are loosely aligned with the RDNA at the present.

Order of the Mithril Star 1993?

This groups was actually a schism from Church of All Worlds, over CAW having strayed too far from the inspiration of "Stranger in a Strange World", but has fallen into the orbit of the RDNA in the last few years, often abbreviating itself as OMS:RDNA; and adapting elements of the RDNA liturgy, constitution, endorsing the literature, and having regular cross-membership in their on-line conferences. Their most ambitious current plan is to set up "Imladris", a commune style village on the West Coast; in a manner reminiscent of the HDNA lifestyle. The have even put out a Green Book with the Druidcraft 101 on-line course text.

I predict that many more groups will splinter off of ADF during the late 90s. I have been out of the country since 1996, so I haven't kept in close contact to record other new organizations, but the family tree has probably sprouted a few new limbs since then. When future research opportunities present themselves, I will update this section.

Conclusion

What Isaac had been doing was essentially overhauling the RDNA system so entirely that it was becoming unrecognizable. In fact, the last issue of *Druid Chronicle* (Dec. 1981) shows a blueprint for what would become the ADF organization. He and a few other NRDNA/SDNA members wanted a stable, legally recognized, hierarchical Neo-Pagan religion that would academically discover the original Indo-European religion by piecing together clues from different cultures. Within a year of the Death March, Isaac left Berkeley and renamed his vision "Ar nDriaocht Fein," which is Irish for "Our Own Druidism," to make it very clear that he had finally broken away from Reformed Druidism.

ADF was in all senses, a new organization. ADF has since developed an envied seminary training program, a rigid hierarchy based on merit not popularity, become a legal church and has been promoting more academically based liturgies and interaction with local communities for Neo-Paganism.²⁶⁶

The official leadership as ArchDruid of ADF was resigned by Isaac Bonewits on January 1st, 1996 c.e. due to health problems and due to his distaste for the restrictions that the office place upon his ability to freely speak his mind. A few Archdruids have followed in succession as the first series of Third Circle Druids are ordained. I suspect that ADF will go off in strange new directions, hopefully for the best.



Figure 12 An engraving of a Druid attending an execution.



Figure 13 Another of Aubrey's illustrations.



Chapter Six:

Reformed Druidism

1983-1993

The Post-Isaac Years

But while ADF and new branches of Druidism were sprouting from the Modern Druid family, Reformed Druidism continued onward in a slightly less organized format throughout the 1980s at Carleton and Berkeley. As we have seen, from the historical records collected so far, the history of Reformed Druidism could be classified as “A Tale of Two Groves”. After the disastrous Death March mentioned in Chapter Four, the Berkeley Grove split into two parts (three if you count Hazlenut Grove), the Mother Grove and the new Live Oak Grove (named after a species of tree in California). Within months after the Fall Equinox election in 1981, the Druid Chronicler magazine and Mother Grove closed, and Live Oak was left and would be the most active grove in the Reform for many years, at a time when ADF was transforming Druidism on the East Coast. In many ways, Isaac had been on the vanguard of one of the waves of the Neopagan community, but as this tropical depression passed by the Berkeley Grove (and the movement in general), things returned to a calm and collected rhythm in the various groves. Things continued on older tracks and people grew wiser from the experience.

I owe a great deal of thanks to Larry and Stacey for their assistance in writing about this period. I have not as intensively explored the possible avenues of research in this decade, and it will show in the absence of footnotes and quoted material. Real life has not been too kind in giving me sufficient time to pursue those studies yet. Hopefully my overview will be sufficient to keep you aware of recent trends, and with the access to grove records and interviews, I will be able to do better justice to the Greenwood Grove of Seattle, Hazlenut Grove of the Bay Area and the Birch Grove in NH; all of which remained active in this decade of Druidism. But for this chapter, I must regretfully concentrate on only the Live Oak Grove and the Carleton Grove’s fortunes.

Live Oak Grove

Live Oak Grove hived off from the Berkeley Grove following the hotly disputed grove election of Fall Equinox 1981, in which Isaac replaced Joan as ArchDruid. Most of the original Live Oak members were dissatisfied with that result; others simply liked Joan's style and wanted her to continue leading a grove. Joan was Live Oak Grove's first ArchDruid, and the original membership also included Emmon, Larry, Susan, and Leslie the Bard.

The grove held its first service in the Berkeley Hills at a place known as Hal's Spot (named after Hal Moe, a Nordically inclined Druid); thereafter (certainly by Samhain 1981) services were held on Emmon's land in Orinda, where they continued until the dissolution of the grove (or after, depending on how you count it). Typically, services commenced about solar noon (rather than clock noon) twice monthly, on the Sundays nearest the Full and New Moons; Highday services were generally held at sundown prior to the day itself, with a social gathering that evening.

Only about a dozen people were ever members, and no more than six or eight were ever active at once -- in the end, only

two. After late 1985, the core group wasn't even the official grove, but rather a rump group left over after an electoral coup. The most influential member (Emmon) was never the official leader; what he regarded as his most important achievement (the RDNA corporation) was arguably his least.

Coalition Council of Dalon Ap Landu

As shown in Part Four of ARDA, this was an attempt in 1981 and 1982 to kick start a new round of inter-grove communication and voting on issues in the absence of any contact from the Carleton Grove. The primary issues were dealing with voting methods of this new sub-committee and re-establishing the Higher Orders. Except for Joan's assumption of the Fourth Order Matriarchy, little else was accomplished by these four groves. Not long after Live Oak started, CoCoDAL mailings ceased in 1982.

Druid Missal-Any

In the place of the CoCoDAL and computer-typed Druid Chronicler magazine was a hand-typed newsletter published by Emmon Bodfish called “A Druid Missal-Any” which soon blossomed from a local grove publication, to become a Reform wide publication. I have no evidence of this publication being received by the Carleton Grove, although Richard Shelton had a few issues in his personal archives, as did Isaac, until 1983.

Now included in Part Eleven of ARDA 2, the 72 or so issues were published about eight times a year about two weeks before the high days of the Druid Calendar. The series ran from February 1982 to February 1991. It is hard to gauge the level of circulation, but a few dozen would be reasonable, with page length between four and forty pages.

The format was usually an introductory letter from Emmon's research into Celtic matters, tied to a season, followed by News from Groves, Live Oak calendar and services notes, and then a few articles and advertisements. Newspaper clippings, illustrations, calligraphy, clip-art, and cartoons added a lively element, missing in previous publications.

Because this publication provides the bulk of existing records on the Live Oak era, we might mistakenly believe that it is sufficient to read it and finish with this era. After all, the pen is also mightier than the staff. But, while it gives us little glimpses into some of the more tangible activities of the Live Oak Grove, there were many developments and events happening on an interpersonal level that go beyond the realm of public knowledge or the scope of this chapter, but would reward the researcher willing to dig deeper into this era.

The only debate of note was the argument between Les, Albionn and Tom Cross over the meaning of truth and manner in which Druidism should be practiced. Tom operated the Post Oak Protogrove in Texas, and was performing research on ancient Gaulish religion, while studying with ADF also. Tempers flared and the debate lasted most of 1987, resulting in Tom leaving the RDNA (along with ADF after similar disputes) to pursue the start-up of Druidactios and publishing “The Sacred Cauldron” and “The Truth about Druids”.

Liturgical Developments.

At Emmon's property from March to May 1982, grove members began improving the grove site, planting a circle of eight trees (one for each holiday), setting up a maypole, and laying the foundation for a stone altar. This was a period of permanency, in contrast to the frequent changes of location in the early Berkeley years, before settling on Hal's Spot in the late 70s.

In July 1982, Joan moved away from the Bay Area, and Larry was elected Arch Druid to replace her; Emmon was elected Preceptor. With this change in leadership came a subtle change in direction: inspired partly by contact with the Celtic scholar named Jim Duran, the grove began to carefully incorporate ritual elements gleaned from archaeological and anthropological literature e.g. the offerings to the trees, the circumambulation of the grove site, and the sacrificial shaft. The intention was not to literally reconstruct the practices of historic Druids, but rather to add ritual elements that were consistent with NRDNA practice, and which also had some historical resonance.

Soon after the July 1982 election, the grove incorporated an offering to the trees into the standard service. During the Summer of 1982 the altar was finished, and it was consecrated on Samhain 1982. The grove also began the practice of sacrificing the previous Beltane's maypole ribbons in the Samhain fire. During this period, the active members were Emmon, Larry, Bob, Susan, and Leslie the Bard.

In January 1983 work began on a sacrificial shaft to make direct offerings to the Earth, next to the altar. Work continued through the Spring, and the shaft was consecrated on Beltane 1983. However, the shaft was repeatedly filled by local voles, who used it to dump their excavation tailings; in April 1985 the shaft was lined with a tile sewer pipe (laboriously hauled up the hillside over a period of several weeks), and re-consecrated.

As so many other members of the previous Berkeley Grove, Emmon also instituted a private training regimen of psychic powers during this period, involving concentration on candles, telekinesis, obfuscation, and meditation. All these were carefully studied experiments and evident failures were accepted along with reported successes. Few of these ever translated into the services, however.

Now since California doesn't have the seasonal variance of Minnesota the concept of a "Season of Sleep" was questioned, as was the high certainty of acceptance in Summer and refusal in winter. Instead, there was the recognition that in Northern California, that there are three possible responses to the sacrifice, not two, and that the winds do not automatically reject the sacrifice merely because of calendar date. Yes, no, and uncertain.

Continuing the trend of interaction with other Neo-pagan organizations in the Bay Area, around October 1983 Emmon began hosting meetings of a Wiccan circle, and for about the next two years, there was overlap between the two groups. It was common to combine the groups's High Day services (or rather, to do the Druid service at sundown, and the Wiccan service later that evening); similarly, normal Sunday services were sometimes combined, with the Druid service at about local Noon, and the Wiccan service in the evening. During this period the active members were Emmon, Larry, Bob, Herb, the Other Leslie (and her disruptive toddler), Susan, Stacey, and Raphael.

The Live Oak Coup

Sometime before the Fall of 1985, Emmon had incorporated the grove as a tax-exempt religious organization. This had been his long-standing intention, going back to the days of the Berkeley Grove; it was the one contribution he felt uniquely qualified to make, and the one he felt most worthy of recognition. But, Emmon did not have long to enjoy this new creation.

In late 1985, the grove splintered in a way common to small groups. The 1985 grove election was held on the Sunday after Samhain, despite the irregularity of holding elections during the Winter half of the year. (This election had first been scheduled for Samhain or the service prior, but several members claimed they hadn't been notified, thus the postponement). Larry and Emmon were voted out of office; in effect, Emmon's tax-exempt

organization had been taken away from him. Whether or not that was the motive for the electoral coup, Emmon believed it was; and tried to have a re-election or have the officers step down. When this failed, shortly thereafter, he forbade the new regime from holding services on his grove site.

Three members remained with the official Live Oak Grove, which soon faded into oblivion, mostly from the Wiccan circle. The Un-official grove, however, continued with hardly a pause. Larry, Emmon, Leslie the Bard, Susan, Stacey, and Raphael held regular and Highday services as before -- in effect, hiving off a new grove, although Emmon always insisted it wasn't really a grove, just a bunch of independent Druids.

Sapping Vigor in Live Oak

Between February 1986 and Spring or Summer 1987, regular Sunday services were suspended, although Highday services continued; thereafter, both regular and Highday services continued until Spring 1993. Leslie the Bard became inactive about Spring of 1986; Susan left the grove in late 1986; Larry left in the Spring of 1987. By mid 1987 the membership was just Emmon, Stacey, and Raphael, and later just Emmon and Stacey in the last few years.

It seems that the reason for the decline of the group was due to both misalignments of personal interests among members and the complications of Emmon's health problems. Larry Press has explained to me that those years were more or less happy and productive years, and as such do not carry the type of material that often makes news headline banners. It is common with Neopagan organizations to go out with a bang or a whimper after about five to eight years, only to reorganize after a few years of reconstitution. Indeed, although Groves come and go, individuals remain and continue their own spiritual developments "off-camera," so to speak, in the background, exchanging cards and running into each other at festivals. Eventually these "atoms" will collide again in the right way, and a new reaction will ensue and a Grove may emerge. This is indeed what happened with the rise of the Baccharis Grove in 1999, as I'll relate in the next chapter.

Carleton's Period of Regency

As we related in Chapter Four, Carleton had a break in leadership after the formidable Archdruidcy of Katya Luamala, which ended in the spring of 1980. A few first orders continued, notably Heidi, to study on campus, but Druid events seized and only one newspaper article appeared on the campus during her remaining time at Carleton. It seemed that with the passing of the Shelton Era, that Druidism was more or less moribund at Carleton, although the campus was still fertile grounds for revivals.

By uncertain means, word reached the Frangquists that Druidism had faded at Carleton, and during one of their visits to campus to assist in Alumni matters, a meeting was scheduled with some students who had expressed interest. Operating in a rather isolated manner, the 1982-5 revival, under the help of the Frangquists and Sheltons, was weakened by three heavy academic loads of its Third Orders who couldn't keep up a Grove and still pass Senior Comprehensive Exercises.²⁵⁸ Very little was done in these years beyond holiday services, and membership soon dropped again. In 1983, Meg Ross and a friend brought three first-year women into the First Order before they themselves graduated. One of these women was Alice Cascorbi.

The Second Revival

In 1985 there was a group of students and faculty on campus who were very interested in feminist spirituality, Neo-Paganism and Dakota religion. Most of the members lived communally at Farm House, tilling a nearby field in the Arboretum, and exploring a wide variety of social possibilities until 1990 or 1991. They formed a group called Pagan Studies, which got official CSA funding until 1991, and brought Selena Fox of Circle Sanctuary over from Madison Wisconsin as a guest speaker on Wicca in 1985 or 1986. The presentation went very well, and Selena was having dinner with some students when Koester (a Carleton student with a nature bent) mentioned that Carleton used to have its own form of Neo-Paganism called the Druids, which he had read about in "Drawing Down the Moon." When Selena asked if there were any still left, they all said no, but Alice Cascorbi stood up and said "Wait a minute, I'm a Druid." Everybody got very excited and an old copy of *Druid Chronicles (Evolved)* was dragged out from the attic and Pagan Studies spawned a subset known as The Carleton Druids.

They never stayed too close to the original Order of Worship and would often experiment with sweatlodges and Wiccan rites. Influence from Shelton and Bonewits lay mostly (respectively) in the *Druid Literature of the Green Book of Meditation* and the *Druid Chronicles (Evolved)*. The services were often evocative and noisier affairs, followed by long chatting sessions and parties. The practice began of going to pagan festivals (like Circle's Pagan Spirit Gathering) or events in the Twin Cities. Although the *Druid Archives' Blue Book* eventually became available to them (to be lost again in 1988), only a handful took any interest in the older debates [probably because DC(E) was rather one-sided in its presentation], because they had more interesting things to study, although there was fleeting contact between Shelton and Koester and Schields. The focus was definitely on the present, although some sense of legacy was felt. The continuity of the Second and Third Order had been officially broken and they couldn't get it re-established officially due to some logistical problems of scheduling. However, many vigiled on their own and considered it just as good, and several years or regular services were held with great zeal, but little in the way of written records, but rich in oral tradition. This eclectic mix of Neo-Paganism, Wicca, Native American religion, and Unitarianism into Carleton Druidism lasted, with a more or less anarchic leadership, until 1991 when most of the Revivalists had graduated or had gone inactive, leaving a confused system to the few young members who were their successors.²⁵⁹

Changes at Carleton

When the Farm House charter for the off-campus house was lost, the Druids lost their central base of operations deep in the Arboretum to the Outdoor Club, and from 1991 to the present, they have perennially raised the issue of seeking a new communal house, but to no avail more or less. Orange House in 1991-1992 and Seecombe House in 1991-1992 offered some semblance of order, but most of the most active Druids have more or less resided at Goodhue Hall or Watson Hall since 1990. Farm House had been for over fifteen years the ecological, protest and folk-arts bases of the campus, tying the Druids into the vibrant Folk Dance and Folk Music clubs, a tradition that would continue into the 90s.

One other problem that beset the group was the increasing conservative changing nature of the campus, moving on the spectrum from "very liberal" to simply "liberal". As Carleton shot up the rankings into the top ten of Private Liberal Arts

Colleges, a number of potential problem-causing freedoms were restricted; notably the Politically Correct movement and being one of the last "non-dry" campus in that select listing. In the previous twenty years, the Druids had experienced little to no pressure on the use of whiskey at Summer services, but as the Grove began to wrestle with the issue of asking for CSA funding for the Druids, the issue was raised of minors partaking of the Waters or recreational drug-use among some members in the late 70s and 80s.

Other factors were involved that lessened the likelihood of continuance of this era's style. Being Sky-Clad at sweatlodges ("druid lodges") or some of the Wiccan observances was also frowned upon by campus security officers and the Dean of Students (although the streaking phenomenon apparently started in America at Carleton in the 1970s, and the enormous turnout for the Winter Nude Olympics in 1991 made the issue inescapable for the administration.) Some of the more "free love" practices among some members at Farm House in the 80s were dampened by the rise of the AIDS epidemic and greater restraint on sexuality brought about by sexual awareness education and spread of diseases. An additional problem of this era was the rise of Christian Fundamentalism in America, which reached Carleton about the same time as the Druids. In a way unseen since the days of the Anti-Druid, disruptions of services, desecration of meeting sites, unwelcome evangelism, and the spreading of rumors affected the open-ness in the way the group reached out to find new members. The low level antagonism never pushed the Carleton Group into an exclusively pagan self-definition, although openly Christian members were fewer in that period; possibly because the Unitarian Club on campus was drawing off a few potential members in that spectrum.

A New Era Dawns

Andrea Davis (1988-1993) bridged this embattled period (as did I (1989-1994), and kept the grove going for a while on her own, despite academic burnout, with the help of Catalyst spirituality club (which lasted from 1991 to 1992). I began my own Reconstruction program in Winter 1992. Not having much personal interest in Wicca, I acquired a fondness for the older styles of Reformed Druidism which my research uncovered. I located Shelton and was ordained into the Third Order and began to provide a feeling of heritage in the grove, while allowing a great deal of freedom and mobility for members to do as they like. I've ordained and counseled over twelve people to the Third Order in the 1993-1995 period, including several past Carleton Druids, began the *Druid Archives* and reopened contact with the Council and other NRDNA groves in the USA. But this will be covered in the next chapter.

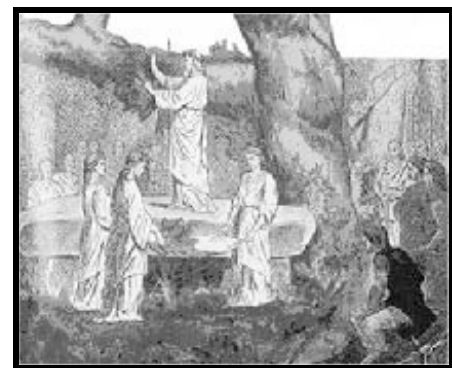


Figure 14 A 19th Century sketch of the Mistletoe harvesting.

Chapter Seven: Reformed Druidism 1983-2003 Revival & Research

Revival of Tradition

It just sounds so egotistically to say it, but I did make some important alterations in the course of Druidism at Carleton during my time at Carleton (1989-1994 and two years of visiting after that). These were only possible by the gracious support from current members and Alumni. I probably alienated more than a few members in 1992-1993 period, at a time when numbers were under thirty on the mailing list and only a handful attending services, when lucky. After 1992, there were few active Grove members older than the class of '94, so it was kind of a rebuilding phase. The Books in Part 9, and my interview in Part 10, will go into more detail, but I'll try to paint the broad picture of both Carleton and Reformed Druidism as a whole. One aspect that bothers me is that, while I have talked to all the principal actors in this period, I have not had a third party interview these people to get a more objective "outsider" view on the history. As a result, the following chapter is unfortunately heavily biased by my own memories and motives. I hope to present a more balanced picture in the next edition, as time passes and allows a truer picture of how events unfolded and the proper weight to assign to them.

Influences

I first attended a few services in the spring of 1990 and Fall 1991 before my overseas trip to Scotland. I had joined because I was fascinated by Celtic music and culture at the time, and I thought the Druids would be a good further study of that material. I was surprised that Celtic influences were rather quite modest, mostly decorative trimming, and this disquieted me then, but after I did further study in later years, I grew to appreciate its non-Celtic charm. By the Fall of 1990, Grove activity was noticeably declining, and after intensive private study of Ancient Celtic Religion and Scottish Gaidhlig, I left for Scotland from Jan to June 1991, thus leaving me little knowledge of its further decline as most members graduated that year. The trip deeply impressed on me depths, and limitations, of the surviving beauty of those Celtic cultures; and yet my Druidism would still evolve in a decidedly non-Celtic manner.

Social Mecca

When I returned to Carleton in Fall 1991, things were aided by the appearance of a social clique known as "Social Mecca", named after Kareem and Curtis' room on the Third Floor of Goodhue, which acted as one of the meeting places of the Druids for much of the 1991-1992 year. There was a poorly defined collective of about 20 new students, in which computer aficionados, sci-fi fans, Druids, Society for Creative Anachronism, theatre members and folk culture fans got together on a regular basis for meals and parties. John Burrige and Heather were also helpful organizers, as was the Catalyt discussion meetings every week at Salem's apartment to discuss pagan issues in general. It was truly a breath of fresh air, and

heady times in Carleton Druidism, a streak that lasted until about Spring 1993 or so, when their increasing studies and other personal issues began to dissipate this group. Services were as eclectic as ever during this period, and as usual, many of the events in related organizations had that "druidic" feel to them also. Throughout the year, I took several religion and poetry classes, harp lessons and practiced several arts and crafts on the side with the SCA. It was probably my most creative Bardic year when I think back on it.

One of the high points of the 1991-1992 year was Margot Adler's visit to the campus to discuss her book "Drawing Down the Moon", which many of the members had read. This book, and the service we had after that, was inspiring for the group and myself. After rewriting her book in 1986, she had assumed that the Carleton Grove had gone dormant, but was pleasantly surprised to see how it had been revived. That and the strange dream I had at Beltane, after the first service that I led, gave me the desire to take a more active role in Druidism at Carleton (and beyond) in the next year. During much of the 1992-1993 period, I still preferred to be the hyper-helpful preceptor, and assisted other people's services. However, as my peers and elders began to graduate one-by-one, I nervously had to assume more responsibilities as my apprenticeship came to an end.

Archives

The 1992-1993 year was spent studying many more Celtic books as I began to prepare a knowledge base for my Senior Comprehensive Thesis, for which I needed a topic in the Spring of 1993. I was certain that it would be on the ancient Druids, but another subject would interest me far more by then. Much like the previous year, me and the other Druids split their time between Folk-Singing, Folk-Dancing, SCA, and Sci-Fi club; and the whole period was richly entertaining. I took several classes in religion and history with other Druids, giving even class work a Druidic feeling, especially on all the field trips to attend services of a dozen different religions; an experience which would encourage me to further emphasize Carleton's eclectic heritage.

Spring 1993 (when I should have graduated, were it not for my travels in Scotland) was troubled by a decline in activity amongst the Social Mecca crowd. Being a historian, rather than a prophet, I turned to my friends and to History to examine how prominent past members had dealt with the issues. I was rather surprised to find that very few records were actually archived at Carleton in those times, except for the Druid Chronicles (Evolved) and a few dozen papers (still better than many other Carleton clubs). At that time, I was deeply divided by the question of whether I was Christian or Neo-Pagan, and when I discovered that the Founders had find a nice balance between the two, it arrested my attention. Having so fully immersed myself in the adventures and debacles of Druidism at Carleton, and my own Celtic studies, I could not help but wish to investigate more into the group's history. I daringly re-oriented by Senior Comps project, and against the wishes of my medieval history supervisor, began a new research project to construct a history of Carleton Druidism. This research would consume much of my senior year (1993-1994).

I sent off a questionnaire in March 1993 to about thirty past Carleton members, and received several friendly replies and began to establish contact with Frangquist, Cascorbi, Schields and Shelton who began to funnel documents to me over the next year. I would interview dozens of Druids by phone or in person over the next year, my identification with the Founders probably deepened after my run into several evangelists who crashed our services that Spring, and then there was the debacle of the Branch Dravidians being killed by the FBI and Justice department. I

began to value the right to worship as we see fit, not as other would wish us to do so. Perhaps I radicalized a little that Spring, more so than I like to recall, and I began to ask myself a lot of troubling questions.

As a result of all this gathering of information, I developed a huge collection of documents from Reformed Druids, ADF, Keltria, and a dozen other groups, which I had studied over the past three years. I also had a large collection of books on the Celts which I donated to the library, roughly doubling their collection.

During the 1993-1994 year, the Carleton Archivist, Eric Hilleman worked with me in cataloguing and organizing all the interviews, documents, clippings, books, constitutions and miscellaneous papers into a permanent collection. There are probably more than three thousand documents in the collection, giving a good base of study for anyway interested in researching American, European or Ancient Druidism. In 1995, I produced the first web-page for the RDNA and made this information available on-line. The collection is quite impressive, but despite wide advertising, it has had very few visitors over the last ten years; perhaps due to the rather inconvenient nature of traveling to southern Minnesota; yet it remains the best documented club at Carleton College.

The unwieldy and inaccessible nature of the collection, however, began to bother me, and I decided in summer 1994 to begin collecting the most important documents to produce a more portable version; which would turn out to be "A Reformed Druid Anthology". The project stall in 1996 and is about due for an over-haul in 2003, after ARDA 2 and the Reunion make new deposits of materials.

30th Anniversary

The Thirtieth Anniversary of Carleton Druidism on April 17th, 1993 was smaller than I had hoped, only six current members attended, in addition to Richard Shelton; whose later advice would sustain and carry me through many rough periods over the next year. I had not been able to reach many of the older alumni yet, nor was capable of handling a mailing of up to 150 past members. Beltane also went well, and the members of the Grove elected me Archdruid; perhaps the first official AD since 1984. When my friend Sam and I went to the Arb a few weeks later to accept our Archdruidship, we were surprised to notice that the next morning a new oak tree had been planted on the Hill of Three Oaks; which we took as an omen. It later turned out to be an illegal planting by the Rugby team to commemorate their own anniversary.

Unknown to us, at the very same time, the Hazelnut Grove was celebrating their own version of the 30th Anniversary in the Bay Area; and got a one page write-up in the Green Egg magazine; which happened to be the first issue that I bought. In this manner, did Carleton and the Berkeley tradition begin to weave connection back together with numerous cross-interviews, exchange of event flyers, and our Dead Lake Scrolls being followed by the Dead Bay Scrolls from their side. Things died down again from 1995 until 2000 when Stacey contacted me, and connections were again established.

The First Dalon Debate

Not long after that on May 21st, 1993 I vigiled and entered the Third Order, again the first "official" one since probably 1984. This meant a great deal to me at a time when legitimacy seemed so important. I would later realize that priesthood is not a one time phenomenon, but more of a daily re-invigorization and re-anointing by dedicated service over time. However, after that I

would go on to the Pagan Spirit Gathering, where I would hear about the Hazelnut Grove's 30th Anniversary and re-establish contact with other Groves, and I returned with unrivaled energy for the 1993-1994 year.

As I've mentioned before, there was a very free sense of leadership in the 85-93 period; where you were a leader because you led. And, looking back, my resurrection of the three Orders at Carleton seems reactionary, and a bit like re-imposing order on a group that had escaped the grasp of authority. At the time, I was probably desirous of titles and other pompous accoutrements; something I'm still wrestling with. My consciously expressed desire then was that it would help clarify and encourage the leaders in the group were, by assigning them with a more firm sense of mission. It would also give them a deeper sense of legacy, and promote a historical curiosity. The concept was passed unanimously by the assembled members of the group at the time, and yet I still harbor mixed feelings of whether it was a proper solution for improving grove activity.

From 1993-1999, the Third Order definitely flourished, and seems to have symbolized a last step towards individual responsibility for their own spirituality, and a bold statement of concern for assisting the welfare of their fellow Druid movements. As of 2003, about 25 Carleton members have entered the Third Order, since the restoration, or about two or three people every year. It's proved to be a big social occasion for the other current Thirds to have "sympathy vigils" on the same night, and groggily celebrate over a joint breakfast. However in 1999, as we'll see, there was a slight change to the procedure.

Senior Comps and Publishing

Events came thick and fast over my senior year as Grove membership swelled, my researches deepened, and I began to publish numerous small collections of material in my spare time; such as Dead Lake Scrolls, Dead Bay Scrolls, Books of Songs and Poetry 1 and 2, Green Books 2 and 3, Book of African Jedi Knight, Book of Ancient Sources, etc. It was a terribly busy year, that did wreck some of my personal relationships, as happens to many seniors at Carleton, I suppose; but it was an exciting time for me. The urge to publish has never really left me since, and I have occasionally been rather shocked at my own zeal, which must have puzzled a few of the more laid-back members of the groves I have been in. However, I've also been reluctant to release the material, choosing to passively wait for people to find it out and get a copy.

My Comps went through a dozen re-drafts as I began to understand Carleton Druidism as less influenced by ancient Druidism, and more of a completely modern phenomenon. I was a bit weak on theory, as is shown in this General History that you are reading, but eventually the 120 pg thesis (twice as big as requested by the history department), eventually was passed, perhaps out of sheer reluctance of faculty members to review it again. With that done in the spring of 1994, I began to put greater interest in picking a successor.

We had had an excellent year, with a special visit by Frangquist at Samhain and a special "Druid Summit" in Spring 1994; when Isaac of ADF, Tony Taylor of Keltria and Richard Shelton came down for Beltane. Most of my first choices for a successor had not expressed strong interest in continuing in the 1994-1995 year, but eventually I found three first year students to take over my duties; Anne, Michelle and Becky. Once my paper was finished, I thought I was free of Carleton, but in fact, for the next two years, I would commute down from St. Cloud MN to visit my friends who had stayed in Carleton's administration after graduation; to make movies with them, and to check on the Druids occasionally.

Half-Dozen Eggs Movie Production

Although never officially linked; from the summer of 1994 to the Summer of 1996, I operated an independent movie company called “A Half-Dozen Egg Productions” with Mark Heiman, and produced three full length films; using dozens of my fellow Druid members as cast and crew members, filming almost exclusively in the arboretum and around Carleton buildings. So in a very poignant sense, they were Druidic movies to me; with their characteristic Carleton sense of humor, prodding at authority and normalcy, and glorifying the beauty and mystery of the campus. None of these movies were widely released, being mostly in-house productions, but it did bring together many members from the 1987 to 1997 period, and we got lots of fresh air and fun together.

Interestingly, my partnership with Mark “Folk” Heiman, my co-producer, led to another Druidical undertaking (A Reformed Druid Anthology) in 1996. Mark had inspired me with his songs in 1990 to undertake further study of the Celtic folk traditions that led me to the Carleton Druids and then study in Scotland. We also played harp and bagpipe together over the years while running the Folk-Singing, SCA, Sci-Fi club and Mystery Science Theatre 3000 club; all events heavily attended by Druids. Mark was never a self-identified Druid, but his monthly all-night song festivals, and weekly “Pickin N Grinnin” sessions have undoubtedly inspired generations of Druids at Carleton since 1988.

The first movie we made together in 1994 was “A Prisoner,” based on “The Prisoner” series, and was a pretty poorly produced spy parody. The second movie in 1995 was “Gator: the Fighting Rabbit,” based on “Ator: The Fighting Eagle,” an amusing spoof of the barbarian action adventure genre, filmed mostly in the forests of the arboretum, dealing with themes of destiny and survival in trying times. This was almost good enough to be commercially released, but it also remained an “in-house” production. The third movie in 1996, “Drake’s 7,” based on the British Sci-Fi series “Blake’s 7,” continues the first movie in about 13 episodes written by various Druids and Druid-friendly writers, spoofing the Sci-Fi genre. Due to budget and equipment failure, this was only completed in 2003.

There are current plans to make a fourth movie in 2004, based on Irony Sade’s romantic mystery “The Soul of Juliana Spring,” which he wrote on the volcanic island of Tonga in 2000. This story is about a Reformed Druid who is inadvertently given custody of a young harpist’s soul in exchange for aiding her musical career. He eventually also becomes a spiritual mentor and friend to her in trying circumstances. Undoubtedly, this movie will also feature several grove members and illustrate the RDNA pattern of the seasons.

A Reformed Druid Anthology (ARDA)

After moving to St. Cloud, MN (a city of 50,000 about 2 hours from Carleton), I began the St. Cloud Big River Grove which met infrequently for two years, while I was studying at St. Cloud State University. I tired of accountancy classes and turned again to international studies. A friend of mine said that German, French and Gaelic were easy languages compared to Japanese, and we took the Japanese 101 class together; and he was correct, but I was hooked and began to make plans to work in Japan as an English Teacher.

During those two years, besides making movies and visiting the Carleton Grove (which went about as usual, under the Triple Archdruidcy from 1995-1996), I was also beginning to make plans to republish the Druid Chronicles (Evolved) for a 20th Anniversary reprint edition in 1996 (first published in 1976).

When I wrote my Comps, I had included several primary documents from Earlier Druid years, producing a very disorganized photo-copied mess that resembled a proto-type of ARDA way back in 1994. I decided that, as I was retyping all the documents on my MacIntosh, that I might as well edit DC(E) a little, and add a few counter-balancing documents, my new publications, etc. It soon mushroomed out of control.

Most Neo-pagan or modern religious groups have perhaps a book or two authored by their founders, but rarely a historical collection of primary documents on this scale. I was immodestly hoping that someone else would someday decide to research the Reformed Druids, and wished them to have a “portable version of the Druid Archives”. The result of two lonely years of long nights on the computer, was “A Reformed Druid Anthology”, a 500 page collection; one that was unlike anything I had seen in my research in the Neopagan world.

In a way, as I began to make plans for a self-imposed “exile” to Japan to escape Carleton’s intoxicating pull, ARDA began to take the form of my parting gift to the Carleton Druids. I didn’t expect to be back for five or ten years, and at the cusp of the internet revolution, did not yet expect to be able to remain in contact with them. I poured much of my soul into composing it, and perhaps as a result, it has done moderately well on the internet since then; having been downloaded several thousand times, far outstripping the 40 volumes that we physically printed at Kinkos at \$40 a volume.

Part of me felt it was presumptuous to publish the ARDA, because as a literary collection, it would leave readers with the impression that Druidism was about writing things down, when it was really about dancing under trees. Certainly Isaac was criticized by past Carleton members for publishing DC(E), but none have so responded to me yet, which makes me wonder when the other shoe is going to drop, and I get my just deserts. It has turned out to be an anchor of tradition for the most recent Carleton Druids, who also rarely want to root in the Druid Archives in the basement of their campus Library. I suppose, Carleton Druids just can’t stand being indoors with dusty old documents, but I’ve seen them dragging that red hardbound book all over the arboretum to services.

Legitimacy

It’s probably that the Carleton Grove’s constitutions were accepted over the years, but its difficult to check that. During the revival in the 80s there was a great deal of hesitancy of making the Carleton Druids “official” again, or requesting funding or to apply for an interest house. Instead other “front” groups were constructed, like the “Pagan Studies Group” in 1988, “Catalyst” in 1992, “Friends of the Earth Mother at Carleton College (FOEMACC)” in 1993.

The underlying reason was that college funded groups had to have listed officers and a copy of the membership rolls. Since most members were pagans or witches, many were hesitant about building up a “paper trail” with the “authorities”. And this continued until 1995, when the Buxom Threesome sent in a new constitution and received funding for the Carleton Druids. There was apparently no outcry and the group has been “legit” since then.

There was one moment in 1997 when a retiring AD was thinking about “closing” the group while Irony was on a sabbatical in Europe, but the grove managed to survive until his return, although activity was near non-existent for the remainder of that year.

Since the 1980s, the Carleton Druids have participated in the Council for Religious Understanding (CRU), much to the displeasure of the rising number of evangelical groups on the

campus. It has been listed in materials handed out by the Chaplain's office and the school's web-page. Even during its unofficial period, the group never had trouble reserving rooms or sites or get articles in the newspapers. We're just too infamous to be unknown.

While not trying to toot the horn, I have been trying to merely appraise other groups of the RDNA existence and role in the development of American Druidism, and keep up contact with the leaders of the bigger groves in the other branches of the groups, like ADF, that descended from Reformed Druidism; through my collection efforts in the archives. In no way, do I consider the RDNA any more or less legitimate than their attempts to construct a Druidical framework to operate in.

Exile to Japan

Not long after the release of our second film, Gator in the summer of 1996, and the first edition of ARDA, I went to Japan to the sister school of St. Cloud State University, which was known as Minnesota State University of Akita (MSUA). Naturally, I immersed myself in the Shinto culture of the farmers in this traditional secluded village in Northern Japan. The Akita Grove soon developed with a mixture of Japanese and American students, basically alternating services between English and Japanese. After I joined the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program, the Shikoku Grove in Southern Japan was founded, and both groves were run by native Japanese since 1998.

As with my trip to Scotland, it was a very intense time of observing a new culture; in this case a modern pagan culture fully welded with technology. I wonder if Japanese society is a possible template for what the American Neo-Pagans are trying to create? During this time, I corresponded with Irony, who was also in exile in Tonga; where he had similar experiences, although they were nominally Christian. I feel that a year off mid-way through Carleton, is quite helpful to giving a Druid a wider experience to draw upon.

Any past reticence about mixing Neo-paganism and Reformed Druidism was melted by my experiences there; as long as the RDNA did not exclusively define itself as Neo-Pagans. I stayed four years in total from Summer 1996 to Summer 2000 and then returned to D.C.; with annual visits to Carleton to visit friends and Druids.

Arboretum Changes

Over the years the Arboretum of Carleton has greatly changed. Until the 1980s, half of the Arb's 800 acres was rented out to farmers of corn, soy-beans, and hay. The original Druids preferred Monument Hill and the Hill of Three Oaks for services in the Upper Arb, not far from an operating Dairy farm that provided milk for the campus until 1965. The Arb is flanked by a 200 acre golf course, a 50 acre cemetery, the town of Northfield, a river, and miles of farmland. It is on a major north-south migration route for birds and deer, with a rich diversity of wetlands, upland forest, riverine forest, natural prairie, lakes, tall grass fields, and successional forest. It became a state game refuge in the 50s, and became more wild and filled from the 60s until the 1980s. At that point, non-native species began to be removed, oak prairie re-established, farmland allowed to turn to successional forest, and trails widened for cross-country skiing.

This transformation forced the Carleton Druids out of the Lower Arb, which had been their haunt in the 1980s. Because of the penchant for sweatlodges, more Druid services have moved to the banks of the river, which has caused conflict with security, over concerns of damaging turtle eggs or wildflowers species in this eco-system. When Farm House stopped being a center for

students interested in farming, the Druids lost a base of operation half-way from the campus to the deeper Arb. The flood in 1993 destroyed the bridges that crossed to the west-side of the Cannon River, making that area also inaccessible. Also many of the meeting sites in the Lower Arb were turned to endangered prairie. Later on, vandalism of stone circles on the hill, led to their relocation. Gradually they were also pushed further and further east by further promotion of the Hill of Three Oaks as a Ultimate Frisbee and Rugby ground and the creation of the Recreation Center in 1999. Since 1996, most Druid activity has returned to the Upper Arb.

The Second Dalon Debate

When I visited Carleton in 1999, Irony wanted to introduce me to his latest attempt to prepare a successor, but mentioned that she had some ambivalence towards toward the Third Order. I made the unusual step of showing the service to her before the vigil and she stated that she was comfortable following a deity that she didn't know very well, and wouldn't enter the Third Order under these conditions. This naturally was a bit stunning, but in the argument that followed, I understood their reasoning that the 1st and 2nd Orders didn't have patrons, although the higher orders did, so why did we need a patron for the 3rd Order? It would be more inclusive to keep it nameless, and simply another organizational title based on service to the Grove than to a Deity, of whom we know nothing.

This reminded me of the 1986-1993 period, in some ways. In one sense, the liturgy was only the surface of a large tradition, and the meat and bones probably remained the same, in my reckoning; so I supported it. After coming to a general understanding, with some short-lived bitterness, they decided to devise a new service that would be more dependent on the invocation of the winds. There was also a questioning period by grove members. Part of me was saddened to see one aspect of a tradition fall away (although the old service was still presented as an option to members) but happy to see a new one being established also.

Unfortunately, I know rather little of the 1999-2003 period, so far, except from brief visits and some e-mail exchange with Ehren and Merri. There have been no comprehensive interviews or memoirs yet. As a result, I can only say it sounds like she built on the rather solid foundation of Irony, and had astonishing grove growth for nearly four years. It's probably to soon to speak about any new developments in this period, and the 3rd Edition of ARDA will speak of those developments more deeply.

But the Wiccan influences seem to have lessened, both due to Andrea's departure from Minnesota, and a rather perplexing lack of background knowledge with incoming members. The group continued to be budgeted by the Carleton Senate, active in the interfaith council, hold weekly tea meetings, sweatlodges, highdays and occasional lunar observances. The standard hodgepodge of investigation into meditation, martial arts, folk activities and theatre continues apace. Sounds like standard happy Druidism to me.

On-line Druids

My own return from exile in August 2000 resulted in a succession of differently named groves within Washington DC; first the Monument Grove at George Washington University, then the D.C. Grove and finally we went totally on-line and I called in the Digitalis Grove. And, in fact, most of my obvious Druidical activity is now spent sending letters and introductory materials to members by e-mail.

The internet revolution has made immense changes in modern Druidism, mostly in terms of speed and cost. I roughly estimate that it is 10 times easier in the 1990s to remain an active part of the overall Druid community than in the 1970s. In Isaac's days, Druids mostly find out by word of mouth, browsing magazines and just running into groups. This still happens, but there is a parallel process in the Cyber World, and its more of an immediate gratification experience, where you can get information and replies to inquiries without have to drive across town or licking a stamp and waiting two weeks. And, as you know, you can meet people anonymously on-line despite being isolated in the Bible Belt or a small mountain in Northern Canada.

Many of the Founders had been specially gifted at early computer programming, even occasionally using some mainframes as altars, actually. Computer match-making also was invented at Carleton in the 1960s, bringing together young couples via zeroes and ones (which can be reassembled to make a druid sigil, by the way). This phenomenon of cyber-druids continued over the years, but communication via computer really began in the mid-80s. Isaac was a convert in the late 70s himself, in desperation to earn a decent living he sold all his occult books and bought programming manuals. At Carleton, all students had e-mail accounts by 1988 (being one of the most linked-up campuses in the country) and there were intra-net system bulletin boards for the Druids and the Vax Notes conference began in 1988 lasting to 1996 with several hundred posts, and distribution of event flyers by e-mail. After 1996 a new web-based program was established and e-mail, even within Carleton's small campus, is still much more convenient than stuffing mailboxes at the post office.

Carleton's first Druid web-page was designed by me in 1995, while still a student at St. Cloud State University. AOL, Prodigy and a few other companies were still the main way to access the internet, and slow download times made distribution of large documents arduous, but groups like ADF, Keltria and a few others had rudimentary pages up by 1996. I would hazard that my publication of ARDA in 1996 was probably the largest Druid collection on-line at the time, but many of the other groups have been slowly building up a collection of on-line resources over the years. This concentration of actors in the Neo-pagan community on a few systems, in the early stages of the internet revolution, Now, although random discovery still happens, there is a sense of "brand name" recognition of which groups are out there, and the search engines correspondingly shuffle people to the most popular sites now.

Recent Events

In Spring 2000, as I was preparing the initial homepage for the RDNA, I got my first letter from Stacey, who had been so involved in the Live Oak Grove. After Emmon's death, she and the other people from the Live Oak formed the Baccharis Grove; partly to work through their feelings about Emmon, and to get Stacey prepared for the Third Order. Not longer after that, and the decline of activity in Baccharis Grove, she established her own grove, called Poison Oak.

By Samhain 2000, Stacey had decided to revive the Druid Missal-Any newsletter, that she had assisted from 1988. I offered to build a web-page and distribute it to people on my mailing list, and those who had joined her NRDNA conference on yahoogroups.com which reached about 30 people in readership. When that conference began to fail, I started RDNAtalk, which was a bit more open to members. Druid Missal-Any gradually added photos, articles and essays on various topics; growing from 4 pages to an average of 28 pages, with a readership now of about 200 people, free on-line. It's pretty thriving now.

As we grew a number of protogroves across the country, we ran into the same problems that had plagued Isaac; how to physically meet and teach the non-written aspect of Reformed Druidism. How to encourage growth, without become obsessed with growth. This has not been solved yet, but it is one of the issues that I'll talk with other Druids at the Druid Reunions to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of Reformed Druidism this year.

ARDA, 2nd Edition

Which brings me to this current collection. I had seriously attempted to publish a revision of ARDA 1 by Jan 1, 2000. I had wished to call it the Y2K edition. I gathered most of the necessary materials, but the time to complete them with Mark never became available, and the project was delayed for two more years. From Beltane 2002 to Beltane 2003, I began to undercover more materials, especially from the NRDNA tradition via Stacey's old and new issues of A Druid Missal-Any. There were also numerous materials produced by the on-line Druid conferences.

Predictions

Now it's time to hazard guess of where the current trends are leading the Reformed Druids. I predict that on-line Druidry will continue to grow and produce numerous works. Trans-generational alumni-student bonds will continue to deepen with 2nd generational Druids at Carleton, more reunions, and greater prevalence of computer skills among alumni. Proto-groves will continue to rapidly appear and disappear, until such time as some type of program is developed to better incorporate them into the community. Reformed Druidism will probably become more recognized in the works of other Neo-Pagan researchers, and a greater sense of the family tree of American Druidism will develop; similar to the current fluorescence and coalescence of the British and French movements. I expect the Indo-European thesis will become a widespread tool for reconstruction of older traditions in Druid groups other than ADF. And I will bet that Carleton students will continue to explore whatever ideas and thoughts interest them from their classwork, despite all the trends of other outside groups. I anticipate bright days ahead, for a few years, at least.



Figure 15 Another Druid evidencing wisdom and a poor choice in fashion accoutrements.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

I hope that my rather long Epistle has helped to disperse some of the possible myths and misconceptions fostered by common assumptions of the term "Druids" and those printed by previous researchers (see Green Book 10). Primary among those myths that I hope to have dispelled are the assumptions of inapplicability of Reformed Druidism to monotheistic faiths or with Neo-Paganism. Similarly I hope the reader no longer associates the RDNA solely with Celtic forms or previous forms of Druidism, nor believes the often printed inevitability of becoming "organized," the overwhelming leadership status of Isaac Bonewits, the idea that humor is incompatible with religion and realizes the problems inherent with researching Reformed Druidism from a sole reliance on Isaac Bonewits or published sources (*including this one!*).

In case you've forgotten, this is a very unofficial history and it presents the RDNA in a far-too organized light. Many (if not most) other Reformed Druids will probably disagree with me on many of my interpretations. Let my ideas be considered as my own personal opinion and do not interpret them as a decisive statement in your further studies of Reformed Druidism. I recommend a closer inspection of the original documents and interviews before tentatively accepting my personal interpretations.

I welcome responses and corrections, but remember in the end that this is my own view of Reformed Druidism and it is but one way, yea, one way among many to understand its chaotic history. Further studies by NRDNA members will probably paint a very different understanding, especially by a researcher more familiar with the background of Neo-Paganism than I am. I hope this paper will act as a guide and reminded us of the many issues discussed and the many independent solutions we applied to the problem of how to be Druids.

Go with my blessing and I thank you for spending the time to read and think about my words.

Master Druid: Tell me, student, what do you believe?

Baka: I believe what I believe, Master.

Master Druid: You have learned well.



Figure 16 A well-known 19th Century shot.

End Notes

Most of these End-notes were produced for the Senior Comps version in 1994 and have not been updated since then.

¹ i.e. New RDNA, Schismatic DNA, Hassidic DNA, etc.DNA

² Reformed Druidism, or "The Reform," is my general collective term for RDNA, NRDNA, SDNA, HDNA and all other branches; but it does not include ADF or Keltria

³ See Part Six: Green Book 10 for other well-known studies.

⁴ While we know many student constitutions were handed in up to 1966, they weren't accepted. See Part Four of ARDA

⁵ The 125 year timeline handout in 1991 has the Druids as one of 60+ special attractions.

⁶ Aver. enrollment at Carleton is around 1500 over the last 30 yrs. See "Celebrating 125 years" timeline

⁷ Non-Intramural Correspondence 2/14/87 Greene to Cascorbi

⁸ Primarily the Druid Sigil, "Druid," pedigree to Carleton and a relationship with Isaac Bonewits

⁹ Part Four of ARDA

¹⁰ Magic, Witchcraft, and Paganism in America pg. 19

¹¹ I recently heard an estimate that there are only 40,000 Quakers and about 180,000 Unitarian Universalist in the US, yet these groups are considered noteworthy.

¹² The last 7 years have seen a lot on encyclopedias and books on Neo-Paganism, feminist spirituality and Wicca. See Part Six: Green Book 10.

¹³ Part Six: Green Book 10 has a few areas that I'd like to see explored further.

¹⁴ Bibliography in Part Six: Green Book 10.

¹⁵ I refer you to Appendix 1 in *Drawing Down the Moon*.

¹⁶ Such as Quakers, Universal Life Church & Unitarians

¹⁷ A medieval enthusiast organization founded in 1969 at Berkeley, now with over 50,000 **paid** members world-wide. Nearly every post 1969 grove in the Reform has interacted with an SCA group.

¹⁸ See Archives

¹⁹ While David Fisher may be considered the biological father of the RDNA, it was Frangquist who nursed and raised Reformed Druidism from infancy to adulthood.

²⁰ Part Three of ARDA :A A collection of scripts from early rituals.

²¹ Part Two of ARDA has a few from this collection of letters by Carleton Druids explaining Carleton Druidism. The Rest in the Archives.

²² See February 1993 Questionnaire

²³ See Oral Interviews in Archives

²⁴ See Correspondence in Archives

²⁵ An "active" Druid is defined by some as a member of a functioning grove. Others define "active" as responding to a letter you send them about Druids. Once a Druid, always a Druid, as some say in the RDNA. At present we do not have Isaac's personal collection which may necessitate a re-write

²⁶ See the last section of the bibliography in Part Six: Green Book 10

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ See Bibliography in Part Six: Green Book 10

²⁹ i.e. Fisherisms.

³⁰ See Roll of Archdruids and Groves in Part Four of ARDA.

³¹ I.e. the college playing Mommy and Daddy for us.

³² Oral interviews, and books on protest (see bibliography) make this very clear. See the Frangquists and Shelton interviews for a closer views on each of these subjects.

³³ Observe in "Celebrating 125 Years" time line publication for effect of these causes on growth at Carleton or read the books on campus protests, especially "Berkeley at War."

³⁴ See Maitland & Smith interviews and "Berkeley at War" for a closer view.

³⁵ Sources are John Nason's Oral Interview & 30 pg. transcript, and comments by Maitland, Smith and other Druids in their interviews.

³⁶ Again, oral interviews with Maitland, Nason and Smith; in addition to Druid interviews.

³⁷ Source interviews with Maitland, Nason, Smith, David & Deborah Frangquist and Norman Nelson.

³⁸ March 1964 Carleton College Catalogue pg. 136; thanks NN!

³⁹ Internal Correspondence 10/23/69 in Part Two of ARDA in the Codex Affair section.

⁴⁰ Oral History interview with Felicia Oldfeather

⁴¹ Feb. 1993 Questionnaire. Howard Cherniack

⁴² It should be noted that the main books used by Druid groups today had not been published yet, that includes the authors Piggot, Ross and Chadwick. They did have Kendrick, which was good. More later.

⁴³ Archival Interview with David & Dee Frangquist 10/31/93

⁴⁴ At that time, women were not considered "deviant" enough to try and buck the system, so the chapel attendance slips were okayed by townswomen who had no idea what RDNA was, and didn't care. The men's slips passed under closer scrutiny and were rejected.

⁴⁵ Feb. 1993 Questionnaire with Nelson, Also interviews with the Frangquists and Nelson. I might point out that most researchers believed otherwise. Many Druids continued to go to the Sunday Choir even after the requirement was dropped.

⁴⁶ Feb. 1993 Questionnaire letter from Norman Nelson pg. 3.

⁴⁷ Ibid. Pres. Nason became a 1st order RDNA member 2 weeks before the requirement was rescinded. Internal Correspondence 6/18/64

⁴⁸ See Maitland interview

⁴⁹ I consider them : Fisher, Cherniack, Nelson & the Frangquists (not just the first three)

⁵⁰ Frangquist interview in Part Ten of ARDA

⁵¹ Questionnaire and oral interviews recorded & unrecorded.

⁵² As originally happened to me in my first 8 months of research. (grow!!)

⁵³ Actually only the office of "Archdruid" has any historical basis.

⁵⁴ Although Kendrick and MacCulloch should have been sufficient

⁵⁵ The story of the continual building of altars and their subsequent vandalism takes up a great deal of space in the Druid Chronicles (Reformed)

⁵⁶ i.e. Rome, Greece, Egypt, Israel, Celtic civilization, Sumerian, American Indian, etc.

⁵⁷ I.e. the goats slaughtered during the Islamic Hadj to Mecca, kosher, some Hindu religions, Santeria.

⁵⁸ Except in the case of war, where they will sacrifice thousands of lives for a religious ideal or goal.

⁵⁹ Druid Chronicles (Reformed) Early Chronicles 5:10

⁶⁰ Druid Chronicle (Reformed) Early Chronicles 5:9

⁶¹ Druid Chronicles (Reformed) Early Chronicles Chap. 5.

⁶² Druid Chronicles (Reformed) Book of Meditations 7:10-11

⁶³ See News Clipping in Archives for samples: Carletonian 11/13/63, Purdue Exponent (on Purdue Grove) 1/5/70 & Drawing Down the Moon article on Druids.

⁶⁴ Repts, Paul. Zen Flesh, Zen Bones. pg. 175

⁶⁵ See Druid Chronicles (Evolved), Green Books in Part 6 of ARDA & Apocrypha in Part Two of ARDA respectively.

⁶⁶ These included Fisher '65, Nelson '65, David & Deborah Frangquist '66/'67, Gary Zempel '66, Dick Smiley, Thomas McCausland, Shelton '71, McDavid '72. Essentially all the key Druids in the RDNA's inter-grove history.

⁶⁷ The reader should know by this point, that it was the Frangquists who were integral people in setting of the foundations for the growth and future appeal of Reformed Druidism.

⁶⁸ Internal Correspondence 1964 Fisher to Frangquist.

⁶⁹ I.e. Druids

⁷⁰ I.e. a Third Order "priest" who stays out all night awaiting the dawn initiation.

⁷¹ Druid Chronicles. Meditations Chapter 10 in Part One of ARDA

⁷² Experimentation in American Religion. pg. 15-18. And Encyclopedic Handbook of Cults pg. 8.

⁷³ Non-Intramural Corr. Fisher to Melton 7/13/73 in Part Two of ARDA.

⁷⁴ Part Six of ARDA, Green Book 2

⁷⁵ Feb. 1993 Questionnaire Glen McDavid pg. 5

⁷⁶ Internal Correspondence 1/28/86 Shelton to Koester

⁷⁷ Especially early Christianity, which I'll discuss later in the Liturgy analysis.

⁷⁸ Quite notably the use of the Waters-of-life in the liturgy, as I will speculate later.

⁷⁹ In many ways, Frangquist may have designed the perfect Zen monastery, a Zen monastery that doesn't know it is a Zen monastery

⁸⁰ Feb. 1993 Questionnaire. Glen McDavid pg. 5

⁸¹ You may be also wondering why it's taking me so long to get to this part. Well, Gibson took over 1400 pages to describe the Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire, but I'll take less than a hundred.

⁸² Some feared to even require these.

⁸³ Druid Chronicle Book of Law, 5 & 6 in Part One of ARDA.

⁸⁴ Feb. 1993 Questionnaire letter from Norman Nelson pg. 2.

⁸⁵ Non-Intramural Correspondence Fisher to Melton in Part Two of ARDA.

⁸⁶ Larry Press interview. Be'al and a couple are given just a smidgen of story, but hardly much.

⁸⁷ Neo-Pagans prefer immanent Divinity. Many hard-core monotheists while claiming both, prefer transcendence.

⁸⁸ Non-Intramural Correspondence 4/64 KARL. The Book was "Histomap of Religion" published by Rand McNally in 1943.

⁸⁹ The Strange Proverbs of Michael Scharding.

⁹⁰ See Part Four of ARDA.

⁹¹ I've looked very hard and reviewed all the interviews. I'm not sure the SDNA differed too much in practice, either.

⁹² Druid Chronicles. Meditations 6:7-8 in Part One of ARDA.

⁹³ Non-Intramural Correspondence Frangquist to Carletonian 11/12/65 This was before sexist terminology was realized. Note "rational" was a loophole for non-religious Druids.

⁹⁴ Druid Chronicles. Meditations 6:9-11 in Part One of ARDA.

⁹⁵ Sort of like the academic "honor system" applied to religious beliefs.

⁹⁶ Frangquists interview in Part Ten of ARDA

⁹⁷ Carleton Apocrypha. A Book of Faith paragraph 5

⁹⁸ Feb. 1993 Questionnaire Ellen Shelton

⁹⁹ Feb. 1993 Questionnaire Faris Keeling

¹⁰⁰ Student Organizational Report RDNA 4/23/65 Frangquist

¹⁰¹ Translation of Uisge-Beatha (Whiskey). "Waters-of-life" appear as a joining medium in "Stranger in a Strange Land," a science fiction book then available. They also show up in "Dune," but that wasn't published until 1965.

¹⁰² Note that "Preceptor" and "Server" are titles swiped from Episcopalian ritual.

¹⁰³ Unrecorded interview with James Hall '64 during Mar 1993.

¹⁰⁴ Again, Nelson Questionnaire response pg. 6. See Druid Chronicles (reformed) Early Chronicles 1:6. I go into Fisher's origins in greater detail in Chapter Four.

¹⁰⁵ Constitutions of the RDNA. Part Four of ARDA.

¹⁰⁶ It might be noted that there are three primary orders in freemasonry and that one "rite" has exactly 10 orders, they being primarily honorary after the third order. Part Four of ARDA for rules and Part Three.

¹⁰⁷ Again, Nelson Questionnaire response pg. 2

¹⁰⁸ Which is one of the primary reason Mr. Fisher has often refused any more interviews.

¹⁰⁹ Student Organizational Report RDNA 4/24/66 by Zempel

¹¹⁰ In fact, he's the one that collected and preserved the "Celtic" scraps in Druid Chronicles (Reformed)

¹¹¹ Non-Intramural Correspondence Fisher to Melton 7/13/73 (In Part Two of ARDA)

¹¹² Druid Chronicles (Reformed) Customs 4:12 in Part One of ARDA.

¹¹³ As a contribution to the "Masonic Theory," Isaac claims in DC(E)'s section on Celtic Deities (Welsh cycle) that another Druid group used Dalon ap Landu also.

¹¹⁴ I refer you to several books on Masonic initiations. See Bibliography, esp. Carnes in Part Six: Green Book 10

¹¹⁵ Caused by bad omens, candidate falling asleep, or deep doubts by the initiating Druid.

¹¹⁶ See Part Four of ARDA

¹¹⁷ See Part Four of ARDA for dates of grove foundings.

¹¹⁸ Women had trouble with all-night vigiling at Carleton until 1970 due to a 10pm curfew on females, thus it was harder for women to become Third-Order priests. Therefore, there was some debate as to how valid their priesthoods were in comparison to men's. This proposal, incidentally was started by Frangquist. This problem is ably discussed in the Frangquist Interview.

¹¹⁹ Records of the Council of Dalon Ap Landu 1/27/65 , Part Four of ARDA.

¹²⁰ This passing of continuity through "Apostolic Succession" may have been a subtle joke on Christianity since it eventually leads back to David Fisher, whom nobody believes to have actually been validly initiated. Zen-point: Apostolic Succession was without foundation, but still considered important. Currently the RDNA of Carleton sees no reason why any Third Order Druid can't ordain another, but the earlier reason was to restrict expansion to responsible people (like, um, ArchDruids?).

¹²¹ It isn't written anywhere that a consensus is necessary but the only accepted decisions have been by consensus. It is an unwritten tradition.

¹²² Internal Correspondence Smiley to Frangquist (Part Two of ARDA.) Savitzky's taped interview.

¹²³ See Chapter Four for further discussion on the Waters-of-Life.

¹²³ See the Epistle of David the Chronicler, Chapter 1 in either form of the Apocrypha in Part Two of ARDA.

¹²⁴ Records of the Council of Dalon ap Landu 5/7/1964

¹²⁵ Interviews Shelton, Press, Abbot, Bonewits, Salee, Carruth, Savitzky, Bradley, Sherbak. Some in Part Ten of ARDA.

¹²⁶ Druid Chronicles (Reformed) Early Chronicles 2:7-10. Part One of ARDA.

¹²⁷ Records of the Council of Dalon Ap Landu 1/27/65. See Nelson interview for the "Missionary Dilemma" about how to consecrate waters without a current preceptor.

¹²⁸ See constitutions in Part Four of ARDA.

¹²⁹ Records of the Council of Dalon Ap Landu 1/27/65 Part Four of ARDA

¹³⁰ Carleton Apocrypha. Book of Faith paragraph 5 Part Two of ARDA.

¹³¹ I refer you to Internal Correspondence 9/68 to 9/69 in Part Two of ARDA

¹³² The "Maybe" response is common. See Part One of ARDA Endnotes 2:6.

¹³³ I.e. Ordained at Carleton Grove (CL) by Fisher in 1965.

¹³⁴ Frangquists Interview in Part Ten of ARDA

¹³⁵ Internal Correspondence 2/5/69 Smiley to Draft in Part Two of ARDA.

¹³⁶ Internal Correspondence 3/24/69 Smiley to Draft. This statement was true, for at Carleton, Smiley felt it was his only religion and the title "priest" is a common title of a minister. Part Two of ARDA

¹³⁷ (CL68:Peck) ArchDruid of Carleton Fall 68-Spring 69 and ArchDruid of Stanford from 1970-78.

¹³⁸ (CL69:Savitzky) AD of Carleton Spring 69-71. AD of Ann Arbor 1974-78.

¹³⁹ How similar to being forced to go to Chapel requirement, whether you were religious or not.

¹⁴⁰ See Shelton interview in Part Ten of ARDA

¹⁴¹ It wouldn't take 1/2 hour to make the RDNA a ULC church without any loss of individuality. But most Carleton students would be too lazy to send in quarterly reports.

¹⁴² Universal Life Church. [Life Is](#) pg. 11.

¹⁴³ Isaac did not, in fact, come to hear about this case until 1993.

¹⁴⁴ Internal Correspondence Shelton to Scharding 4/24/94

¹⁴⁵ Internal Correspondence Shelton to Scharding 4/24/94, see also Shelton to Council 16 October 1969

¹⁴⁶ Internal Correspondence Shelton to Scharding, sometime between 1994 & 1995.

¹⁴⁷ Interviews with Stefan and Carruth. Most Druids are delighted to hear Carleton is STILL going.

¹⁴⁸ Internal Correspondence Shelton to Scharding April 24th, 1994.

¹⁴⁹ For more on this see Frangquists & Carruth interviews. Drawing Down the Moon, too.

¹⁵⁰ A fun tidbit is that the large British Druid group, OBOD, also began in 1963. Coincidence?...You, the reader, decide.

¹⁵¹ Perhaps the Neo-Pagan revival was the opposite effect of men and women becoming disgusted at the prominence of males in controlling the understanding of religion. Further study on such a topic would be very interesting to follow.

¹⁵² For which the Compass and Straight edge are it's symbols.

¹⁵³ Intriguingly, Pythagorans also had a seeming prohibition on writing down their beliefs. See Part Six: Green Book 10

¹⁵⁴ Frangquist interviews and Nelson interview. See Bibliography for books available on Druidism at Carleton during the early 60s.

¹⁵⁵ Frangquist Interview 10/31/93 in Part Ten of ARDA and Nelson & Cherniack. See Part Three of ARDA.

¹⁵⁶ Norman Nelson & Fisher were both Episcopalian and Druid Founders. Adler "Drawing Down the Moon" pg. 322 thought the same of a descendent service at Stanford. This is seen especially in the naming of the lower two officers as "preceptor" & "server." The term "Arch-Druid" was, of course, a common term in academia from the times of Caesar. See News Clipping from the Carleton Voice in 1988 by James Hall.

¹⁵⁷ Feb. 1993 Questionnaire letter from Norman Nelson pg. 6. Frangquist interview.

¹⁵⁸ Archival Interview with David & Dee Frangquist 10/31/93 in Part Ten of ARDA. Internal Correspondence 1964 Fisher to Frangquist & 11/28/69 Fisher resigns Patriarch of Grannos (See Part Two of ARDA)

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Larson in Part Ten of ARDA. But, Nelson is unsure if it's true.

¹⁶⁰ Larson notes possible Christian carryovers of St.Paddy's Day, Easter and Lady's Day.

¹⁶¹ In order to explain this attitude, I highly recommend that the reader should watch Monty Python's "The Life of Brian"

¹⁶² For Isaac's analysis of the Order of Worship see the Part Two of ARDA , 2nd Epistle of Isaac and the Real Magic review in Part Six: Green Book 10

¹⁶³ The precise combination is a matter of controversy. The most prevalent ratio of Whisky to water is 1:3 except on festivals (during the summer half of the Year) when it inverts to 3:1.

¹⁶⁴ Latin's similar translation for whiskey is "Aqua Vitae," the waters of life.

¹⁶⁵ However a chronological problem is that distilled beverages were not invented until the 6th century at least, long after evidence for ancient Druids ceases. Larson however suggests that heat distillation may have existed earlier, or perhaps even through freeze-distillation.

¹⁶⁶ We go into far greater detail about the Druid Calendar in Part Four of ARDA and Part Six: Green Book 7 of ARDA

¹⁶⁷ I.e. Christmas, Sabbaths, Sundays, Fridays (Islam), the birthday of Krishna, etc.

¹⁶⁸ Again, see the Bibliography in Part Six: Green Book 10

¹⁶⁹ From the Founders (Fisher, Nelson, Cherniack and Frangquist), three would eventually return to Episcopalianism

¹⁷⁰ I didn't even know of Berkeley's non-collegiate base until a month ago, that's how dangerous any reliance on spotty written records can be without lots of interviews.

¹⁷¹ I.e. animal sacrifice, orgies, kidnapping, brain-washing and other such clap-trap theories by anti-cult "experts." I refer you to Drawing Down the Moon and "In Gods We Trust" in the bibliography.

¹⁷² "Berkeley at War" chapter 2. A delightful chapter.

¹⁷³ I need only refer you to the "Berkeley in the Sixties" video in my bibliography.

¹⁷⁴ I refer statistic-freaks to "Experimentation in American Religion" in the bibliography.

¹⁷⁵ See Shelton, Frangquist,(both in Part Ten of ARDA) and Abbot & Savitzky interviews.

¹⁷⁶ See Drawing Down the Moon Chapters 3,4,5 & 7 and Bonewits, Hixon, Press, Tezera, Carruth, Abbot, Sherbak, & especially Bradley interviews.

¹⁷⁷ Chapter 3 of Drawing Down the Moon and Interviews with Joan Carruth, Bonewits & Bradley.

¹⁷⁸ Interview with Isaac Bonewits 2/23/94 and see most encyclopaedias' almost exclusive focus on the RDNA's fulfillment of this role. See Appendix D..

¹⁷⁹ Observation, conversations and interviews with Taylor, Bonewits & Sherbak.

¹⁸⁰ Since that time, the Celtic field has been swamped with other organizations. See list of groups in Appendices of Drawing Down the Moon and Circle Networking Directory.

¹⁸¹ See Part Four of ARDA

¹⁸² Interviews with Shelton, Bonewits, Carruth (both in Part Ten of ARDA) and those of Tezera, Sherbak, Hixon, Press, Salee, Savitzky, Bradley and McDavid (unrecorded). See Drawing Down the Moon Chapter 14 and Part Six: Green Book 10 for more discussion on the Neo-Pagan's background.

¹⁸³ A medieval society found in Berkeley in 1968 with over 50,000 paid members world-wide. See interviews with Shelton, Bonewits, Press, Carruth, Salee, Bradley, Larson, Savitzky, Scharding and the Frangquists. Internal Correspondence 4/1/72 McDavid.

¹⁸⁴ Pick any interview

¹⁸⁵ See Interviews with Savitzky, Cascorbi, Adams, Shelton, Bonewits, Bradley, Abbot and Larson. see the Archive's Computer Notes on the "famous" Reformed Druid IBM program.

¹⁸⁶ See interviews of Shelton, Frangquist, Adams, Cascorbi, Bradley. Seidel was a super folkdancer.

¹⁸⁷ Interviews with Larson, Abbot, Carruth, Bonewits.

¹⁸⁸ Without being elitist, many Carleton missionaries complained about the lower intellect of members.

¹⁸⁹ He received the first and last bachelor's degree in "Magic and Thaumaturgy," to tweak the nose of the University. See Larson, Bonewits, Carruth, Press, Abbot and Sherbak for more personal descriptions about Isaac, good & bad, not to mention Part Six: Green Book 10. Isaac was always tweaking noses.

¹⁹⁰ Ordination to the Third Order is, sadly, restricted access

¹⁹¹ One of the ironies of this, sometime obsessive, reliance on Celtic sources is that it may take centuries to nurse together the surviving fragments; in which time a new system might be developed.

¹⁹² I apologize for the use of the term "Affair" which sounds much too sexy, however the "Isaac Intercourse" and "Isaac Interaction" sound equally silly.

¹⁹³ Isaac was ordained in October 1969 by Larson.

¹⁹⁴ Drawing Down the Moon 1986 pg. 422 and Interviews with Bonewits and Carruth.

¹⁹⁵ Larson, being Isaac's roommate in 1969, would have told him about Shelton's Codex Affair. Larson wrote to Shelton in 1969 about the matter.

¹⁹⁶ Records of CoDAL 27, January 1965 Council (a) in Part Four of ARDA

¹⁹⁷ Records of CoDAL 27, January 1965 Council (b) in Part Four of ARDA

¹⁹⁸ Remember that Carleton students have little free time or money to track down the addresses of everybody, compose mimeograph masters, separate and mail out frequent letters. However, even a yearly letter was neglected.

¹⁹⁹ Internal Correspondence 4/25/72

²⁰⁰ The term "wars" could have been chosen because several correspondents in the RDNA and NRDNA often employed unusually aggressive terminology.

²⁰¹ See "Real Magic" and Isaac Letters in the Apocrypha

²⁰² Isaac's majority vote is a natural result of widespread confusion regarding voting and Book of Law verse 12 from the Druid Chronicles, which only applied to the Carleton Grove, not the RDNA, although they were identical at the time.

²⁰³ Interviews of Larson, Carruth, Press, Bradley and Drawing Down the Moon chapter 3. Any letter from Internal Correspondence 7/18/74 to V:10/21/76 is also good territory to browse through, reprinted mostly in Part Two of ARDA.

²⁰⁴ Drawing Down the moon pg. 13.

²⁰⁵ The First Epistle of Isaac 2:4 in Part Two of ARDA

²⁰⁶ Internal Correspondence 7/18/74 Isaac to everyone 1:5-7. First Epistle of Isaac in Part Two of ARDA.

²⁰⁷ Frangquist interview and any letter by a Shelton.

²⁰⁸ Frangquist interview in Part Ten of ARDA.

²⁰⁹ See Part Eleven of ARDA: V: 10/21/76 and 6/21/76 for explicit affirmations of Neo-Paganism.

²¹⁰ Feb. 1993 Questionnaire Glen McDavid pg. 5

²¹¹ Internal Corr. Shelton to Isaac 8/14/74

²¹² In interviews many "NRDNA" members said that Neo-Paganism for them was an openness to all religions, but that it was hard to communicate this to outsiders so that they could understand this.

²¹³ Internal Correspondence 5/26/76 Larson to everyone Epistle of Robert in Part Two of ARDA.

²¹⁴ Drawing Down the Moon chapter 1 "Paganism & Prejudice" for the pros & cons of names. It might be noteworthy that even the relatively open-minded Carleton Druids were initially frightened by the name and took a bit of time to be calmed down.

²¹⁵ Frangquist's interview in Part Ten of ARDA.

²¹⁶ Carleton Apocrypha. Book of Faith paragraph 5 in Part Two of ARDA.

²¹⁷ I.e. in a service, "circle" is a term borrowed from Wiccan practices

²¹⁸ Interview with Stefan Abbot. It should be noted that Stefan was by no means on friendly terms with Isaac.

²¹⁹ Stefan absolutely hated the Jesus People, back then.

²²⁰ Interview with Stefan Abbot, NRDNA member since 1970. It should be noted that the mood of the Archdruid often attracts and repels different people, regardless of intent.

²²¹ Feb. 1993 Questionnaire with McDavid pg. 8

²²² Before laughing, remember that Protestants and Catholics went to war over what happened to the host during the Mass.

²²³ I'll cross reference these later, but many are referred to in Druid Chronicles (Reformed), Black Book of Liturgy and in the interviews with Carleton Druids. (Part One and Three of ARDA respectively.)

²²⁴ Only plants are allowed in Reformed Druidism and nearly all Neo-Pagan groups, Wiccan covens, etc.

²²⁵ Carleton Apocrypha. Book of Faith paragraph 8 & 9 Part Two of ARDA.

²²⁶ Carleton Apocrypha. Epistle of David the Chronicler Part Two of ARDA.

²²⁷ Non-Intramural April 1964 KARL radio broadcast. "Spring Thaw?" in Part Two of ARDA.

²²⁸ Internal Correspondence. 5/29/76 Ellen Shelton to Isaac in Part Two of ARDA.

²²⁹ Internal Correspondence. Epistle of Richard 5/24/76 Isaac in Part Two of ARDA.

²³⁰ Internal Correspondence. 5/26/76 Larson to everyone Isaac in Part Two of ARDA.

²³¹ I'll save those for future scholarly essays.

²³² **Druid Chronicles**

²³³ DC(E) Book of Changes Chapter 2 in Part Two of ARDA. See also Part Four of ARDA.

²³⁴ Bradley always gave his vote to McDavid, his predecessor. See Part Four of ARDA.

²³⁵ Hassidic (Jewish) Druids of North America in St. Louis, they were a split-off in the SDNA, see Part Five of ARDA.

²³⁶ They referred to it as the "Provisional Conspiracy of Arch-Druids." The Provisional Council, appears to have been a term used in some events of the Cultural Revolution, also.

²³⁷ Internal Correspondence 7/18/76 in Part Two of ARDA.

²³⁸ DC(E) Book of Changes 4:2 in Part Two of ARDA.

²³⁹ DC(E) Book of Changes Chapt 3 & 4 in Part Two of ARDA.

²⁴⁰ DC(E) Book of Changes Chapt 5. Part Two of ARDA.

²⁴¹ 1976 Shelton communication with HDNA (unrecorded) and Interviews with many people ordained by Isaac while he was an SDNA ArchDruid. (Salee, Sherbak, Press)

²⁴² Magic, Witches & Witchcraft in the US pg. 61. See Part 6: Green Book 10.

²⁴³ See Part Eleven: Druid Chronicler vol. 2:1

²⁴⁴ "Druidh" in Scots-Gaelic is a little bird. I kill me. Ha! However, Larson believes that "the wren (Irish dreoilin) whose old name was "druidh-en" meaning "druids' bird." See you're not making a pun after all!"

²⁴⁵ Interviews with Savitzky, Salee, Bonewits, Bradley, Larson, Carruth & Abbot.

²⁴⁶ Unless they are a cover-up, the listing of events and activities in the Druid Chronicler issues should indicate the activity-orientation of many of the groves.

²⁴⁷ For further study of backstage amendments and corrections see Internal Correspondence, many documents between 1976-1977, many of them in Part Two and Four of ARDA.

²⁴⁸ Some would say restrictive orthodoxy.

²⁴⁹ If you think that was semantic, the Frosts got into a lot of trouble with Wiccans when the published "The Witch's Bible" instead of "A Witch's Bible." Another interesting trivia point was that the Carleton Grove archives were nearly lost by Corey. This might have made them apprehensive that Isaac's version would become the only version available to future historians. Of course they didn't tell Isaac, it would just have shown their incompetence even more. See Internal Correspondence 4/10/76 in Part Two of ARDA "Beltane Tips" & 9/9/76

²⁵⁰ It has had various additional titles tacked on. Part Eleven of ARDA :XXXXI B (incomplete)

²⁵¹ The close of a grove is rarely documented because of the stressful causes underlying it. Interviews with Savitzky, Bradley, Bonewits, Press, Carruth, Abbot, Bonewits, Shelton & Larson and the Druid Chronicler are my main sources of knowledge on this period, which will hopefully be clarified in my Second Epistle. See Part Four of ARDA and note the "Bermuda Triangle Years" of 1977-1980 as I call them.

²⁵² See interviews with Carruth, Abbot, Salee, Sherbak, Bradley & Savitzky.

²⁵³ See Part Four of ARDA

²⁵⁴ Read the Dead Bay Scrolls and Dead Lake Scrolls of Part Nine of ARDA for more on this time.

²⁵⁵ A humorous account of the Death March incident is in Part Nine of ARDA's Dead Bay Scrolls is balanced by the uncatalogued 12/81 issue of Druid Chronicler in Part Eleven of ARDA and interviews with Bonewits, Carruth, Abbot & Press.

²⁵⁶ A rarely used title, also found at Carleton, I believe in 1/8/86.

²⁵⁷ See uncatalogued Druid Chronicler 12/81 in Part Eleven of ARDA.

²⁵⁸ See Internal Correspondence 4/25/82 onwards to present. Interviews with Frangquists and Shelton in Part Ten of ARDA Personal conversation Tom Lane & Bob Nieman (unrecorded).

²⁵⁹ Interviews with Alice Cascorbi. Carleton Newspaper Clippings and assorted materials..

²⁶⁰ Interviews with Sam Adams. Later Internal Correspondence, Newspaper Clippings, Confessions of an Archdruid, Material from the 1990s, my 5 year personal diary.

²⁶¹ Remember that Reagan was Governor of California in the 60s, Neo-Pagans didn't like him any better in the 80s! These are known as the "Boring Years" see Dead Bay Scrolls in Part Nine of ARDA.

²⁶² See Part Four of ARDA.

²⁶³ As far as I'm concerned he's still a member in good standing of the N/RDNA, merely on an individual path that differs wildly from other members at the present.

²⁶⁴ This alone makes many Reformed Druids cringe.

²⁶⁵ Larson notes that the Celtic interlace seems to have stemmed from Saxon/Norse art forms, and it was unknown in Hallstatt or La Tene Celtic art (or pre-Christian). Joke's on Isaac! A Celtic "tree of life" designn would have been more appropriate.

²⁶⁶ I've included a copy of "Vision of ADF" in Part Two of ARDA to give you an idea of what Isaac was thinking about in the late 70s.

²⁶⁷ Except the 200+ pg. Druid Chronicles (Evolved), for size reasons of course

²⁶⁸ I would, ideally, prefer the reader to be sitting in the IDA, examining the documents.

²⁶⁹ Isaac is definitely an important one, but no one Druid (not even me) can authoritatively speak for the mind of the whole group.

²⁷⁰ See Druid Chronicles (Evolved) for the breakdown of it's contents

²⁷¹ Druid Chronicles (Evolved) Introduction to Chronicles of Foundation.

²⁷² Most of the contributors and editors were from the Berkeley Grove.

²⁷³ The Green Book was mainly confined to Carleton until Mid-90s.

²⁷⁴ Carleton Apocrypha, see Part Two of ARDA.

²⁷⁵ Of which you are reading volume 1.

²⁷⁶ Savitzky and Larson had both studied at Carleton.

²⁷⁷ Pg. 300 1978 edition; 321, 1985 edition in Part Six: Green Book 10 of ARDA.

²⁷⁸ Pg. 301 1978 edition; 323, 1986 edition. The last part of the quote is pushing it a bit far in Part Six: Green Book 10 of ARDA.

²⁷⁹ Interviews with Bradley (Humanistic), Savitzky (skeptic), Larson (Paleo-Pagan), Cindy Salee (Taoist/Native American).

²⁸⁰ Magic, Witches & Witchcraft in the US pg. 13 in Part Six: Green Book 10 of ARDA.

²⁸¹ Ibid. pg. 34 in Part Six: Green Book 10 of ARDA.

²⁸² Ibid. pg. 35 in Part Six: Green Book 10 of ARDA

²⁸³ Ibid. in Part Six: Green Book 10 of ARDA.

²⁸⁴ bold face is mine, not theirs

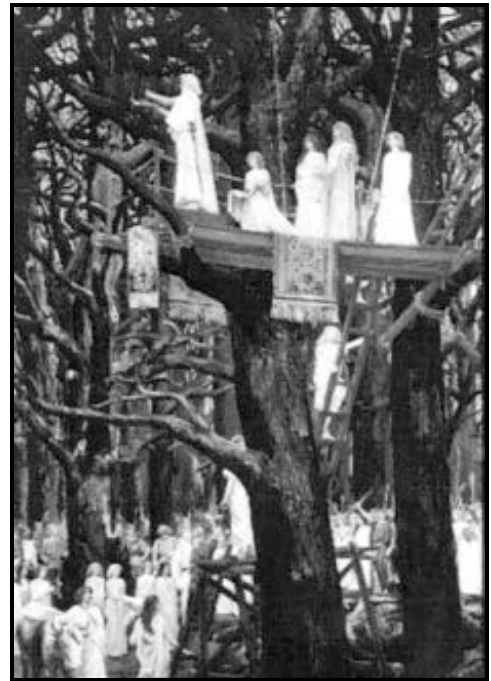


Figure 18 We sure have plenty of Pliny aficionados.



Figure 17 Inspiring locations for Bards are not always conducive to audiences or personal safety.



Figure 19 So Endeth Part Eight