

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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received **SEP 20 1985**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

OCT 4 1985

1. Name

historic Eagles Hall

and/or common Eagles Hall

2. Location

street & number 733 Eighth Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town San Diego N/A vicinity of

state California code 06 county San Diego code 073

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Michael and Margaret Speyer

street & number 212 Fourth Avenue

city, town Del Mar N/A vicinity of state California 92101

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of County Recorder, County of San Diego

street & number San Diego County Administrative Building, 1600 Pacific Hwy.

city, town San Diego state California 92101

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title "Uptown San Diego" Survey for SHPO, 1980 has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Office of Historic Preservation, Sacramento, CA

city, town Sacramento state California

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u> N/A </u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Eagles Building is an austere monumental, three-story fraternal hall with minimal classical details. It is flanked by two buildings of similar size in an urban San Diego setting. Its appearance is the result of a 1930s remodeling and expansion, undertaken at a period when the organization was greatly expanding its activities in the community. Integrity relating to this period is high.

Designed in 1917 by William H. Wheeler and John Selmar Siebert, the building became the home of the San Diego Eagles Aerie, No. 244. In 1934 the building was enlarged by the same architects. The structure is a monument and a rarity in San Diego. A search using city directories was made to locate fraternal organization buildings in San Diego, of that style, and no other of that era, roughly 1920 to 1950, could be found. Although in 1952 the west facade was covered with a heavy stucco texture, it has retained the features represented in the 1934 enlargement of the building. This is a formal, austere street facade that reflects and presents a visual image of the nature of the organization. Its present appearance is a reminder of an era in which the Eagles provided humanitarian assistance to victims of the Great Depression.

In June 1917, the Eagles Aerie No. 244 contracted with architects John S. Siebert and William H. Wheeler to design a three-story building at 733 Eighth Avenue in San Diego. The original neoclassical revival, sand-stuccoed brick structure was built for use as a lodge and social hall which measured 50 feet by 96 feet and contained 10,900 square feet. The original 1917 facade was of common brick covered with sand-textured stucco and cast stone. It consisted of evenly spaced pilasters, three window bays, and a central door opening. The pilasters are detailed with simple bases and capitals, with the two central capitals detailed with leaves and fluting. Original to the 1917 facade was a large triangular pediment.

By 1934, the lodge had grown to such proportions that a purchase was made of Lot "C", Horton's Addition, next to the building on Lot "D", and the same architects were contracted to build the addition to complement the original structure. While the need for the building had been apparent several years earlier, financing for such an addition waited until the more urgent social needs to which the Eagles had committed themselves could be handled.

The building as modified in 1934 now contained 18,000 square feet on a frontage of 100 feet by a depth of 96 feet. The San Diego Union of July 28, 1934, contains an architectural rendering of the proposed expansion to the Eagles original building. Much of what remains today is the strength of the 1934 addition.

In 1952 Rohr Aircraft Corporation purchased the building when the Eagles once again outgrew the space and moved from what was then becoming an undesirable section of downtown San Diego. At that time, the Rohr Aircraft Corporation modified the interior to accommodate several small office spaces. Some of the original wood window frames were

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1934 **Builder/Architect** William H. Wheeler & Selmar Siebert

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

This structure was for many years the headquarters for San Diego's Eagles, a fraternal group making significant philanthropic contributions to the community. Although not distinguished architecturally, the Eagles Hall retains much of its appearance of 1934, a year in which the lodge's activities were greatly expanded. Building of the lodge represented a major private effort to cope with problems created by a national economic depression. Following the lead of the Federal Government, the Eagles developed their own public works project employing Eagles lodge members to construct the building. The finished structure was the largest fraternal building in the city, and one from which the organization carried out a much enlarged social assistance program.

For 35 years (1917-1951), this hall was the permanent home of Aerie Chapter No. 244, San Diego Eagles Lodge, and is one of the very few such original fraternal halls still standing in this region of this era. A detailed reading of San Diego City Directories was reviewed for such organizations and their "halls" and then a field survey was carried out to locate such buildings. None built in this era of this style remain in the San Diego area. During the American "Depression" of the late 1920s and 1930s, the Eagles, by their own design and ingenuity, created a number of ways to financially help citizens of San Diego who were down and out. This was a leading fraternal organization which made significant contributions to the causes of heart and cancer research and aid to the mentally handicapped. From its inception in San Diego this Eagles Lodge has been composed of people not only from the ranks of judges, mayors and top business people, but from those of the white and blue collar workers. Hundreds of organizations, groups and individuals needing support have been helped by this Chapter of the Eagles.

The local Aerie No. 244 was established on Tuesday evening July 29, 1902. The newspaper of the next day listed the officers and mentioned meetings to be held. The Charter with the first 100 names is dated September 1, 1902. Activities were held in temporary quarters at a hall on Sixth Avenue between "D" and "E", and at a hall at 1031 Second Avenue.

Among early members of the Lodge were John F. Forward, mayor of San Diego, Colonel D. C. Collier, one of the major financial backers and planners of the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition, Sheriff Frank M. Jennings, and Jack Dodge, railroad entrepreneur who formed the nucleus of the fraternal society. Heilbron's History of San Diego, lists the presidents and other officers for the years 1902 to 1936. Such men as Mayor Edwin Capps, who designed several of San Diego's extant suspension bridges and recent Mayor Frank Curran are numbered among those Eagles whose interest to aid others was foremost. Two pages of portraits of past worthy presidents were included in the 65th anniversary book published in 1966-1967.

The traditional history reveals little of the aerie happenings for it is rumored that the early records have been misplaced, but membership grew and then in 1915, with the opening of the Panama-California Exposition, the Order took part in parades with a

9. Major Bibliographical References

American Architect, January, 1919
Architect and Engineer, May 1928 and November 1928.
City of San Diego Water Department, Chollas Heights Branch (hookup records)
(continued)

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Point Loma Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	1	4	8	5	3	9	1	3	6	1	9	2	9	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundaries encompass Assessor's Parcel Number 535-103-03 (Lots C and D). These are the combined historic properties acquired by the Eagles in 1917 and 1928.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A		N/A	

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. Ray Brandes and Milford Wayne Donaldson, AIA

organization Wayne Donaldson, Architect

date March 29, 1985

street & number 733 "F" Street

telephone (619) 239-7888

city or town San Diego

state California 92101

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Kathryn Shalteri
State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date August 8, 1985

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Wilson B. Busby

Keeper of the National Register

date 10/4/85

Attest:

Chief of Registration

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San Diego Historical Site Board Report, 1984
Site #189

Depository - City of San Diego Planning Department, San Diego, California

The Eagles Hall was determined eligible for individual listing as part of a Tax Act certification evaluation in 1984.

A-2964H

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removed and replaced. The original mullion cross pattern shown in the historic photograph were removed and replaced with casement windows. The original wood entry doors on the first floor were replaced by aluminum and glass doors. The north interior stair appears to have been added in 1952; the walnut and wrought iron bannister detailing is contemporary in design. Finally, in 1952, Rohr Aircraft Corporation occupied the building and proceeded to cover the west facade with a heavy stucco texture, added wrought iron light fixtures and partitioned the interior open spaces.

The 1985 Eighth Avenue facade represents the 1934 expansion which modified the 1917 facade. The expanded facade of 1934 was of concrete block covered with sand-textured stucco. The pilasters, windows, and spacing were added to compliment the existing architectural style of the 1917 facade. The original metal window frames and casements of the 1934 expansion remain intact, with some original glass remaining. The simple flat frieze running the entire length is original to the 1934 structure which replaced the 1917 triangular pediment. The north facade is built of concrete block with four original doors. Two metal frame windows on the first floor and four on the second floor appear to be original. Two original metal firestairs remain.

The rear east facade consists of exposed brick and concrete block. The south facade is built of brick which as been coated with a stucco finish. The seven original windows on the first floor are filled in with block while the three original windows on the second floor remain intact.

The first floor interior has been modified by the subdivision of the original large, open space. The original columns and beams remain although several original walls have been removed. The original 24" slab marble flooring in the entry and wood flooring elsewhere remain, but have been covered by linoleum tile and carpeting. Portions of the original decorative tile in the entry have been covered by paint and paneling. The "Mission Deco" style is seen in the bannister detailing of the south stairway and appears to have been constructed in 1934. On the walls of the first floor meeting room are small murals depicting various patriotic symbols (flags, eagles, California bears) and other landscape scenes. These original picturesque wall murals had been covered with drywall and paint. The murals which are painted on plaster walls had substantial damage from installing the drywall.

The second floor has been modified only slightly and is in good condition. It originally served as a social hall with a series of small rooms off the hall being used as restrooms and support facilities. The original oak flooring remains throughout the second floor, but has been covered with linoleum tile; occupying the floor is a clothing manufacturer.

The third floor consists of one large room divided by the original brick wall of the 1917 structure. The walls are exposed wood frame, brick, or concrete block. The ceiling is exposed 2 by 6 joists. The space is currently being used as offices.

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The Eagles Aerie Hall as it appears in 1985 has retained the major features of the 1934 modification when the second half of the building was completed. Modifications since have been minor and are reversible; the fabric is clearly present. Note that the design was intended to reflect the strength of the Order of the Eagles in the flat pillars extending from the sidewalk level to the top of the third story.

The presence of this structure represents the permanent home of an organization of strength during a time of trial in American social and economic history. This home presents a visual image of the role that a ceremonial/philanthropic organization can play toward aiding the poor and the down-and-out in times of distress. Here the San Diego Aerie Eagles Chapter No. 244 occupied and planned what they would do for the citizens of their community for 35 years. It lies a short distance east of the Gaslamp Quarter National Historic District, where the streetscape is made up of a variety of buildings, some of which themselves have fallen on hard times. The Eagles Hall, by its historical/architectural integrity, however, remains as an excellent example of the concept of American ingenuity in times of stress.

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sponsored crack drum and bugle corps, entertained state conventions, all the while carrying out their fraternal beliefs. While the Eagles rented several halls, they did not have a permanent local home, nor did they yet have their full role in community assistance clearly defined. It would remain in part for a nation in economic distress to fully define that role.

Lots "C" and "D", Block 72, of Horton's Addition were first sold in 1870. Until July 1917, their ownership changed many times until Dr. Oliver V. Kaiser, a dentist, acquired Lot "D". A native of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, prominent in the Eagles, he would be worthy president three times. On behalf of the Aerie, Kaiser contracted with William H. Wheeler and John Selmar Siebert, architects, to draw up plans for a building on Lot "D", and dealt with the Adelphi Security Company to put up a building at a cost of \$12,300.00. Wheeler and Siebert were members of the Lodge as was Theodore H. Lohman, president of the construction company, himself a designer and builder. The initial story in the San Diego Union of June 21, 1917, carried a short column noting that the Eagles were having a new brick building two stories in height built.

By August, Mayor Louis J. Wilde had conducted the formal ceremonies of laying the cornerstone for the lodge building. Jacob Weinberger (later a Federal Judge) was chairman of the building committee. Both the San Diego Daily Transcript and the Evening Tribune reported on the first meeting in the new hall in mid-November 1917, and the latter paper carried the architect's rendering of the new building.

The San Diego Aerie No. 244 insured every member who went to the front during World War I with an automatic insurance policy for \$1,000, although the organization was not an insurance agency. This, its major initial benevolent act, came as a result of a world conflict. On May 30, 1922, the Aerie No. 244 unveiled a monument at Mount Hope Cemetery in San Diego, in memory of members killed in World War I. But the organization, to sustain its membership, had to have other kinds of social activities and so held celebrations, fiestas, and sponsored drum and bugle corps and drill teams which took western and regional honors in competition.

It is no historical accident that the greatest increase in membership in the Fraternal Order of Eagles, both nationally and locally, came during the years of the nation's greatest financial depression, 1932, 1933, and 1934. But by the early 1930s, benefits to members included weekly sick and accident indemnity, funeral benefits, free medical service to them and to their dependents. These and the club and social privileges became a strong magnet to membership.

On June 19, 1928, O. F. Neverburg sold Lot "C" of Block 73, to the Fraternal Order of Eagles, San Diego Aerie No. 244. With the added space to build and time to raise a building fund, by February 1934, Wheeler and Siebert designed an addition to the structure on Lot "D" for Lot "C". The Eagles contracted with John C. Moore and the Weymouth Crowell Company to construct the addition at a cost of about \$14,500.00.

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The Wheeler-Siebert drawing of the proposed building appeared in the San Diego Union of September 24, 1933. The venerable Dr. Oliver V. Kaiser was, at this time, chairman of the building committee and one of his associates was Judge Jacob Weinberger. What had inspired the Eagles to go ahead with construction at a time when jobs and money were scarce makes sense when a talk of Dr. Kaiser's echoed those of the worthy presidents of other Eagle Lodges:

President Roosevelt's national recovery program spurred the San Diego lodge of Eagles into action instead of waiting until "times get better"...

We expect to follow out our President's ideas as used in public work, paying good wages, but will employ only Eagles...

In a visit to San Diego in January 1934, Senator George Nordlin of Minnesota, and Grand Worthy President of the Fraternal Order of Eagles, pointed out the role of the Eagles during the hard times which had then a membership of 550,000 and assets of more than \$29,000,000. He said that since the order was founded,

It has paid out \$41,229,000 in sick benefits; \$9,700,000 in funeral benefits, and \$14,261,000 for physician's services to members and their dependents... We can also look pridefully at the record of our humanitarian services. Thanks to the Eagles, laws providing for care of old folk outside the poorhouses are now on the statute books of 25 states of the Union and two territories.

Nordlin continued,

The old age pension laws, of which you have heard and read so much in the last few years, have revolutionized a degrading social system hundreds of years old. We helped to pass the laws providing for workman's compensation and pensions for widows who, without such aid, would have to put their dependent children in institutions.

The Eagles believe in preservation of the home. That is why we have tried to help the family in every crisis---in sickness, in accident, in unemployment, in death.

On July 29, 1934, hundreds of the San Diego Eagles, Aerie No. 244, and their friends opened the enlarged building at 733 8th Avenue in San Diego. The reported cost was \$34,000.

Eagle activities to raise funds for cancer research and to aid mentally handicapped youngsters continued. In June 1938, 5,000 Eagles arrived in San Diego for their 35th Annual Convention and held a five-mile long parade. A good portion of the Convention program was devoted to the role of the Eagles in a society still beset by a depression, and while economic and health benefits remained topics high on the list, the Order made a pledge to support such community projects as teams and groups that would one day organize into Little League Baseball, Pop Warner Football, the Boys Clubs of America, Drill Teams, and held Mother's Day and Memorial Day services each year.

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Beyond those supportive projects there would be included as recipients of their money and time the Max Baer Heart Fund, Damon Runyon Cancer Fund, Jimmie Durante Kids Fund, Home on the Range, Chapel of the Four Chaplains, Hi-Sky Ranch for Girls, and the Salvation Army. These were among the projects which received funding by this single lodge.

During World War II membership dropped off, and by November 1952, the Fraternal Order of Eagles began to look for another building. In part, because of deteriorating conditions in this section of San Diego, members were finding it difficult to take wives and families to this area.

The San Diego Union of November 21, 1952, reported that Rohr Aircraft Corporation had purchased the building, the three stories containing 18,000 square feet for use as offices. During the time of that ownership, the cosmetic changes in the building took place, and for some time the structure stood vacant when it was leased to the San Diego Community College District for adult education and then a social service department center for the County of San Diego.

For four years the San Diego Aerie, Chapter No. 244, met at the Maryland Hotel nearer the center of the city, but with membership on the rise again to 2,600 members, in August 1956, the Lodge broke ground for its new home at Center Street and University Avenue. Appropriately, Richard Wheeler, one of the architects to design the earlier structure for the Eagles, was chosen as the architect for the new building.

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Heilbron, Carl. History of San Diego County. San Diego: San Diego Press Club, 1936, Part I, p. 151, which gives an updated history of the Aerie, and cites names of all officers and their positions in the organization up to 1936.

Historic Resources Inventory, "Uptown San Diego," for State Historic Preservation Office, by University of San Diego, 1980. DPR Report filed on the Eagles Hall with this survey.

Interview with Bryan Adams, architect, San Diego Community College District Office, June 15, 1984, by Ray Brandes.

Interview with Jack Isabell, Public Affairs Officer with Convair, June 18, 1984, by Dr. Ray Brandes.

Interviews with former Mayor Frank Curran, City of San Diego, June 20 and 21, 1984, by Dr. Ray Brandes.

Interviews with staff currently employed by San Diego Chapter of the Aerie during June and July 1984, related to gathering of historical information about the organization's activities.

Mortenson, Frances Bryson. "William H. Wheeler," in Directory of San Diego Architects, 1869-1939, University of San Diego, 1984.

Photographs from collection of Frank Curran, former Mayor, City of San Diego, and longtime member of San Diego Aerie No. 244.

Photographs from Ticor Collection---San Diego Historical Society.

Photographs (current) provided by Wayne Donaldson, AIA.

Photographs (current) provided by Ray Brandes, Ph.D.

Sanborn Fire Map, 1921-1956, California Room, San Diego Public Library.

San Diego City Directories, from 1920-1970, various publishers.

San Diego County Assessor's Tax Roll for 733 8th Avenue, San Diego.

San Diego County Assessor's Map in Book 515, page 10.

San Diego County Assessor's Commercial-Industrial Record for 733 8th Avenue, San Diego, California 92101.

San Diego County Recorder's Office:
Deed Books
Mortgage Books
Miscellaneous Books
Building Contract Index

San Diego Daily Transcript:
"Notice of first meeting at 733 8th Street," November 19, 1917.

San Diego Aerie Lodge #244, Eagles, Anniversary Booklet, 1966-1967, (65th anniversary)

San Diego Evening Tribune:
"Eagles to Dedicate New Hall Tuesday," November 19, 1917. (Photos)

San Diego Historical Society Biographical Files.

San Diego Public Library:
Biographical/vertical files.
Microcard index and standard card indexes for San Diego Union, 1900-1960.

San Diego Union:
"Eagles Plan to Build New San Diego Home Immediately," September 24, 1933.

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San Diego Union (continued):

"Eagles Emulate Example of NRA's Symbolic Bird: Ground Broken by Eagles for Club Addition," (Photos), January 7, 1934.

"Dedication of New Hall...", January 7, 1934.

"National Board Eagles' Project, Leader Asserts," (photos) and

"History of Eagles Order," January 17, 1934.

"New Building for Aerie No. 244--Celebration...", July 27, 1934.

"San Diego Eagles Fly Far Since Aerie's Modest 'Take-Off' in 1902," July 27, 1934.

"Welcome to the New Home of Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie No. 244---733 8th St.," July 28, 1934. (Illust.)

"Hundreds Dance in Ballroom of New Eagle Home," July 29, 1934.

"San Diego Eagles Proud of New Headquarters," July 30, 1934. (Illust.)

"5,000 Eagles arrive in San Diego for 35th Annual Convention," June 10, 1938.

"Rohr Aircraft Corporation Buys 3 Story Eagles Hall for Additional Offices," November 21, 1952.

"New Eagles Building Started," August 12, 1956.

University of San Diego, Graduate History Department. Architects of San Diego, 1869-1939," San Diego, 1984.

World Book Encyclopedia, "Eagles, Fraternal Order of," World Book, Inc., 1984.

