

## **Tour Guide - HISTORIC TRENTON MASONIC TEMPLE - Joseph F. Seliga - December 21, 2007**

### **FUNDING**

- In May 1917, \$125,000 was raised for a new Masonic Temple.
- Because of America's entry into World War I, no further fund raising was done.
- In 1921, fund raising was begun again; \$400,000 was raised.
- In 1924, the Masonic Temple Association prepared a pamphlet and raised an additional \$350,000.

### **DESIGN**

- In 1923, a design competition opened for New Jersey, New York and Philadelphia Freemason architects.
- American Institute of Architects rules were used [no names on any drawings].
- Seven architects submitted designs.
- On July 15, 1923, first place awarded to Harry Armstrong Hill of Hill and Gollner, Trenton.
- He designed the Hill dormitory at Princeton, Hildebrecht Hotel and the Harrison and Carroll Robbins schools.

### **CONSTRUCTION**

- James H. Morris Co. member of Trenton Lodge No. 5 since 1901, was awarded the contract for construction.
- He was a successful builder of the Trenton City Hall, Trenton Fire Quarters, Hamilton Township High School, the Strand Theater and the Morrisville Bank.
- His bid of \$610,111 was accepted on April 1, 1926; Ground breaking was held on May 8, 1926.
- The Cornerstone, from the 1884 Masonic Temple, was laid on Oct. 9, 1926.
- The Masonic Temple was opened for use on February 28, 1928.

### **BUILDING EXTERIOR**

- Indiana Limestone on a gray granite base. [This was from the 1884 Masonic Temple which was razed in 1917 and stored for the new Masonic Temple.]
- It had a Copper Roof, the largest in Trenton in 1926.
- The Willow Street facade is 156 feet long and 709 feet high.
- Six Doric columns support the central tympanium of the entry portico.
- Three sets of Oak Doors, adorned with Masonic Symbols are at the Willow Street entrance.

### **BUILDING MATERIALS**

- Five hundred tons of steel.
- Twenty-five thousand bags of cement.
- Twenty-five thousand cubic feet of granite and limestone.
- Seven hundred bricks.
- Four thousand cubic yards of reinforced concrete.
- Forty thousand square yards of plaster.
- Sixty thousand square feet of flooring.

### **BUILDING INTERIOR**

- The building has three finished floors and one unfinished floor for expansion.
- The first floor contains a Foyer, Lounge, Library, Billiard Room and Club Room.
- The second floor contains three lodge rooms.
- The basement has a great banquet hall, which can be separated into three sections, a regular kitchen, a buffet kitchen, Ladies and Gents rest rooms, a ventilating system and furnace.
- Decorative painting of the interior was done by Gustave A. Brand

### **FOYER**

- The 15 by 50 feet Foyer has walls and arches of Botticino marble and has a floor of Travertine marble.
- The Foyer floor has brass insets of squares and compass, level, plumb, setting maul and a trowel.
- The Foyer also has painted allegorical figures of Justice, Fortitude, Prudence and Temperance.
- The Foyer also has a frieze containing Masonic Symbols.

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### **LOUNGE**

- Walls were painted to resemble creamy white Caen stone and topped with a painted frieze.
- The ceiling was of ornamental colored plaster and the floor was covered with Travertine tile.
- The 70 by 70 foot lounge contained 7 sofa's, 2 writing desks with chairs , 1 table, 4 banquettes, 18 arm chairs, 8 pillar chairs and 6 smoking stands and cost \$594.00.

### **BILLIARD ROOM**

- Located on the Front Street side of the building; named after William R. Thropp. His family donated the tables.
- Contained three pool tables and a billiard table within its 46 by 40 feet size.
- The room is paneled and trimmed in American Walnut.

### **LIBRARY**

- Located on the southeast side of the building overlooking the Delaware River; named after Joseph O. Stokes.
- This 38 by 40 feet room contains American Walnut book cases, had stenciled walls and Persian carpets.
- The room is paneled and trimmed in American Walnut.

### **CLUB ROOM**

- Located on the southwest side of the building overlooking the Delaware River.
- The room is paneled and trimmed in American Walnut.

### **BANQUET ROOM**

- The capacity of the room is 760 diners.
- Two sets of folding doors can be used to separate the room into three sections.
- There are Ladies and Gents Rest Rooms on this floor.
- The room is served by a main kitchen with gas ranges, steam tables, hot closets and dishwashing machines.
- Two large fans were used in the ventilating room to drive either cool or heated air throughout the building.

### **LODGE ROOMS**

- Three rooms, Doric, Corinthian and Ionic, each designed in the architectural period of their name.
- Each has an attached Tyler's room, preparation, examination, committee and dressing rooms.

### **DORIC ROOM**

- This room has plaster walls painted to look like stone and topped with a frieze containing Masonic Symbols.
- The ceiling has cast molding decorated in gold leaf; the floor has an embroidered rug.
- Mural paintings representing Relief, Brotherhood and Truth adorn the East wall.
- There is a balcony in the rear of the room with walnut trim.
- The furniture of the room is made of walnut and upholstered in red velour.

### **IONIC ROOM**

- This room has plaster walls made to look like travertine marble and large columns supporting the three balconies.
- The fumed oak beamed ceiling is decorated in color; ornamental wrought iron lighting fixtures are used here.
- Mural paintings representing Faith, Hope and Charity adorn the East wall.
- The furniture of the room is made of fumed oak and upholstered in blue velour.
- The floor has a multicolored Persian rug.

### **CORINTHIAN ROOM**

- This room has plaster walls divided by pilasters adorned with acanthus leaves.
- The ceiling has cast molding decorated in gold leaf; the floor has an embroidered rug.
- Mural paintings representing Justice, Truth and Love adorn the East wall.
- The furniture of the room is made of walnut and upholstered in red velour.