

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

SENT TO D.C.

10-4-96

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name **Sterling Masonic Temple**

other names/site number **N/A**

2. Location

street & number **111-113 West Third Street** not for publication ___
city or town **Sterling** vicinity ___
state **Illinois** code **IL** county **Whiteside** code **195** zip code **61081**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property Xmeets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William L. Carter / SHPO
Signature of certifying official

10-1-96
Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
State or Federal agency and bureau

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Social Sub: Meeting Hall
Commerce Specialty Store

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Social Sub: Meeting Hall
Commerce Specialty Store

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Chateausque

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone
roof Rubber
walls Brick
Stone
other Copper
Terra Cotta

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a

master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Social History

Period of Significance 1900, Criterion C
1900-1946, Criterion A

Significant Dates 1900

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Ashby, George W., Architect

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

___ previously listed in the National Register

___ previously determined eligible by the National Register

___ designated a National Historic Landmark

___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

___ State Historic Preservation Office

___ Other State agency

___ Federal agency

___ Local government

___ University

___ Other

Name of repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreeage of Property less than one

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	16	275810	4629530	3	_____	_____
2	___	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

name/title David Newton, Assistant National Register Coordinator

organization Illinois Historic Preservation Agency date August 14, 1996

street & number 1 Old State Capitol Plaza telephone 217-785-4324

city or town Springfield state IL zip code 62701

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Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage
or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====
Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name **Richard Gebhardt, Sterling Temple Association**

street & number **Box 493**

telephone _____

city or town **Sterling**

state **IL**

zip code **61081**

=====
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for
applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties
for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to
amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a
benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended
(16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated
to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing
instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the
form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form
to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box
37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget,
Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Sterling Masonic Temple

Description

Summary

The Sterling Masonic Temple is located at 111-113 West Third Street in Sterling, Illinois. Sterling is approximately fifty miles northeast of Rock Island, Illinois in eastern Whiteside County. The Sterling Masonic Temple is a four-story brick building with a limestone foundation. It was designed by Riverside, Illinois architect George W. Ashby in 1899 following a fire on December 30, 1898 which nearly destroyed the old Masonic Temple. Ashby designed the new building, salvaging as much of the original material as possible to save costs. The original stone foundation, first story brick wall, and portions of the second story were reused for the new building with new brick walls built on top of the old walls and a new front facade added to the building. The Sterling Masonic Temple was formally dedicated on May 16, 1900. The Chateausque styled building has a steep pitched front mansard roof with high, pinnacled gable dormers. The main roof gently slopes down to the south (rear) of the building. The building has a first story storefront with a central recessed stair entry to the quarters of the Masonic Lodge. Originally, the Sterling Club, a social club, occupied leased quarters on the second floor and the Masonic Lodge occupied quarters on the third and fourth floors. Today, the Masonic Lodge occupies quarters on the second, third, and fourth floors. The first story is rented out to an appliance dealer. The building is located in the west side of downtown Sterling and fronts north onto West Third Street. Originally the building was surrounded by commercial buildings on the east and west sides as well as across Third Street to the north. In 1992, the commercial buildings across Third Street to the north were demolished for a new shopping center and parking lot. To the west of the building is an 1880s three-story, commercial building. Buildings to the east of the Masonic Temple have been demolished. Further to the south, southeast, and southwest of the building are industrial buildings. Across West Third Street to the north is a parking lot for the new shopping center. The building is four stories tall on the front (north) facade and five stories tall on the back (south) facade. The lot slopes down to the south towards the Rock River providing ground level access to the full-height basement in the rear. An alley and small parking area are located to the south of the building.

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Exterior

The Sterling Masonic Temple has a limestone foundation of rectangular blocks set in straight, horizontal courses. The side and rear walls of the building are reddish brown brick while the north, front elevation is blond brick. The brickwork pattern on the side and rear elevations is six courses of stretchers divided by a single course of alternating stretchers and headers. The brickwork pattern on the front elevation is a stretcher bond. The windows on the front elevation have stone sills and lintels. The basement, first story, and second story windows on the rear elevation have stone sills. Windows on the third and fourth stories of the rear elevation have metal sills. The rear elevation windows were replaced by glass block in the 1950s. Originally, the mansard roof was covered with Spanish tile. The tile was replaced with black asphalt shingles. The sloping flat roof is covered with a rubberized roof.

The front, north elevation has a first story storefront with a central recessed entry. Originally on either side of the central entry was a large plate glass window with four lower windows and four transom windows. The storefront was remodeled in the 1970s with two large plate glass windows and a reddish-brown brick bulkhead on either side of the entry. The transoms were replaced with black colored glass panels. The recessed entry originally had a double entry door leading to a stairway to the upstairs with single angled store entry doors on either side. Galvanized iron with decorative tracery and transom windows were located above each doorway. The double central entry door was replaced with aluminum and glass doors. The entry doors to the store were also replaced with aluminum and glass doors. New black glass transom windows replaced the original transom windows over the store entrances. The galvanized metal panel with decorative tracery still exists above the central entry way. Large dressed stone blocks are located at the bases of the corners of the building and on either side of the recessed entryway.

Four stone and brick buttresses are located at the ends of the building and between the first story transom windows and recessed entry. Springing from these buttresses are stone bases with terra cotta griffins. The griffins are painted black with a red cross on their bodies. A narrow, stone stringcourse is located at the second story line at the stone bases of the griffins, forming a sill for the second story windows. The second story has a central one-over-one window with a transom. This window is located directly above the central recessed entry. On either side of this window are three, one-over-one windows with

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transoms. The second story windows have aluminum storm windows covering the original wood windows. Wide, dressed stone forming a hood with rounded corners and keystones caps the second story windows. A wide stone stringcourse connects the stone window hoods above the second story windows. Above this stringcourse between the second and third stories is a centrally located horizontal stone panel with the words "Masonic Temple" inscribed.

A narrow stone stringcourse is located at the third story window sill level. Three evenly spaced one-over-one windows with transoms are located in the center. Four stone and brick buttresses which extend up to the fourth story dormers are located between the three windows. On either side of these windows are three smaller one-one-over windows with stone sills. Wide, dressed stone forming a hood with rounded corners and keystones caps the third story windows. A wide dressed stone stringcourse caps the third story windows forming hoods over each window.

Above this stringcourse is a copper cornice with dentils. The cornice has been painted a cream color to match the brick. Large stone caps are located at each end of the building at the cornice line. Above the cornice is the mansard roof and dormers. A set of three large brick dormers are located in the center. The dormers have single pane windows with transoms above. The dormers are capped by stone and steep copper gables with decorative pinnacles on either side of the gables. The copper is painted to match the brick. The gables have low-relief decorative moldings with garlands and a torch. At the gable peaks are crosses. A smaller gabled dormer is located on either side of the three large dormers. These dormers have a small horizontal window with decorative gables above. The copper gables have low-relief moldings with garlands and a central shield with a cross. The gables are capped by a cross. On either side of the gables are pinnacles. Stone coping is located at each end of the mansard roof with copper coping along the main roof line.

The east elevation of the building originally was located adjacent to a three story building. A doorway at the basement level towards the south end of the building leads to the furnace room and storage areas in the basement for the Masonic Lodge. Two windows were located at the center of the second story, a window in the center of the third story, and a window on the fourth story in the center of the building. They were bricked in at an unknown date. The east elevation has been painted a reddish-orange color.

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The rear elevation of the building originally had two-over-two segmental arched windows. They were replaced in the 1950s with multi-pane glass block windows. On the basement level beginning near the east end is a window. To the west of this window is a doorway, a bricked in window, a doorway, and a window. The first story has five openings. The central opening, which originally was a window has been converted to a doorway with fire escape. The second, third, and fourth stories all have five openings. Fire escapes are located towards the west of the building and are accessed from all four stories.

The west elevation is located adjacent to a three story building and has no openings.

Interior

The interior of the Sterling Masonic Temple has a furnace room and storage areas in the basement, store on the first floor, kitchen, dining, and club rooms on the second floor, the lodge and anterooms on the third floor, and storage rooms on the fourth floor.

The first floor has a recessed central entryway with a tile floor. Angled doors on either side of the main stair open into a store space. The store has display platforms located on either side of the entries along the front, north plate glass windows. The basement stairs are located underneath the main stairs. A small rest room is behind the stairs. The store has dropped ceilings and plaster walls. Two cast columns in the center of the room behind the stairs and rest room help support the second floor.

The central main stairs lead to the second floor. The stairs have a wooden wainscot with a large wooden hand rail. The second floor was originally the headquarters of the Sterling Club until c. 1918-1920. The Sterling Club was a social and civic club. A large central hall runs to the south from the main stairs. The hallway has vertical tongue and groove wainscoting with a chair rail. Large doorways with operable transoms open into rooms along the hall.

In the northwest corner is the reading room. It has a beamed ceiling with plastered walls. A wide plain board chair rail encircles the room. The floor has three inch wide hardwood. A classical inspired fireplace is located on the west wall. The upper panel has egg and dart molding and a beveled, horizontal mirror. The mantel is supported by wood fluted columns with Ionic capitals. The ornamental metal fire box is surrounded by glazed tile.

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Two large bi-fold panel doors open into the banquet and ball room to the south . An angled window opens into the central hall at the northeast corner of the room. The room has a plain chair rail. A tile ceiling was added to the plastered ceiling. The walls are plaster. The floor is three inch wide hardwood.

A small pantry with built-in shelving to the east of the banquet and ball room connects to the kitchen. Originally a small kitchen and ladies' drawing room were located in the southeast corner of the building. Walls were removed between the kitchen and drawing room in the 1920s after the Sterling Club vacated the second story quarters to make a larger kitchen for the Masonic organization.

To the north of the kitchen, east of the central hall are men's and women's rest rooms. North of the rest rooms is the former card room which has been converted into a storage room for the Masons. A billiard room is located to the northeast. The billiard room has a beamed ceiling. The walls are plaster and the floors have three inch wide hardwood. To the northwest of the billiard room is a passage connecting the room to the reading room to the west. The passage has four wooden columns on pedestals with Ionic capitals. Built-in book shelves are located along the south wall.

The stairway to the third floor is located at the south end of the central hall. Double five-paneled doors with a glass transom provide access to the stairs. The Blue Lodge Masonic symbols with a square and compass are placed on the lower panels of the doors. The stairway leads to the south, up to the third floor and turns to the east at a landing.

On the third story is the tyler's room at the southeast corner. West of the tyler's room is a preparation room. Paired doors lead from the tyler's room into the lodge room. The large, two-story vaulted lodge room is completely surrounded by anterooms, storage areas, and a gallery, creating an inner chamber for the performance of secret rituals and initiation ceremonies and shutting out the exterior world and outsiders.

According to William D. Moore, author of "The Masonic Lodge Room, 1870-1930: A Sacred Space of Masculine Spiritual Hierarchy," in Gender, Class, And Shelter: Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, V the lodge room was of central importance to the Masonic character of the building.

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"The lodge room was where Masonic rituals were enacted. It was where the abstract idea of a fraternity of men took concrete form, and where a lodge defined itself. . . . As fantastic realms, lodge rooms were decorated in historical motifs so that the Masons could separate themselves temporally, as well as spatially, from the ordinary world. Revivalist styles presented on furniture and wall decorations allowed the Masons to leave the present and lose themselves in a romanticized past."¹

The Sterling Masonic Temple lodge room is the central focus of the building with its vast two-story space and Gothic inspired interior.

The lodge room is finished with dark stained cherry and plaster. Wainscoting encircles the room and serves as a short dividing wall for the members' gallery on the west side of the room. A hammer-beam roof with five sets of trusses decorates the ceiling. It rises from a wide cherry cornice that encircles the room. The trusses run east to west. Carved tracery with quatrefoils is located between the curved braces and ceiling. Large pendants are located at the bottoms of the hammer beams and at the center of the large curved braces between the hammer beams. Curved braces intersect with the hammer beams and run north to south. These braces are also decorated with quatrefoils and have centered pendants. Five square wood piers support the members' gallery and serve as the base for the curved braces of the hammer-beam roof on the west side of the room. The plaster coffered ceiling has two recessed vaulted vents in the center of the room. Glass skylights in the center of the vaults open to provide ventilation for the room.

At the north end of the room is the elevated platform of the worshipful master. Behind the platform is a three-part stained glass window. Yellow and green art glass is located behind the worshipful master and centered above is a stained glass window with the Blue Lodge Masonic emblem with a square and compass, and stained glass windows on either side with decorative torches. Along the east wall is a doorway to the commandery room. At the south end of the room is the elevated platform of the senior warden. Above the station of the senior warden are two symmetrically placed stained glass windows. The windows open to allow viewing from the fourth floor to the lodge room ceremonies. Symmetrically placed doorways are located on either side of the platform. The east doorway leads to the tyler's room to the southeast and the west doorway leads to the preparation room to the southwest. A doorway on the south end of the members' gallery also leads to the

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preparation room. A cherry altar is centered in the room. The stations of the worshipful master, altar, and senior warden are all aligned on a central north-south axis. The raised platform of the junior warden is aligned on an east-west axis with the altar.

The commandery room along the east side has original built-in wood lockers and wardrobes for regalia and uniforms of the lodge. A walkway leads from the north end of the commandery room along the north wall of the lodge room to the gallery on the west. Sunlight from the north windows of the building comes into the stained glass windows behind the worshipful master's station through the walkway.

Originally the fourth story was the kitchen and dining room for the lodge. After the Sterling Club moved out of the second story in the early 1920s, the lodge moved its kitchen and dining facilities to the second story. The fourth floor is used mainly for storage. A stairway along the east wall of the building leads from the tyler's room to the fourth story. A hallway encircles the upper level of the lodge room on the east, north, and west sides. The former kitchen and dining room were located on the south side, above the tyler's and preparation rooms. The two stained glass windows on the south side of the lodge room open into the former dining room. When the lodge room was filled, additional members could watch proceedings from these windows.

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Statement of Significance

Summary

The Sterling Masonic Temple is locally significant for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It meets Criterion C for architecture as a good example of a Chateausque styled building with its high, steep-sided mansard roof, wall dormers with high, pinnacled gables with decorative low-relief moldings and elaborate pinnacles, brick and stone masonry walls, and windows divided by narrow mullions with transoms above. Designed by Riverside, Illinois architect George W. Ashby in 1899 the building's period of significance is 1900, the year the temple was dedicated. The Sterling Masonic Temple also meets Criterion A for social history for its role as the headquarters of the Masonic fraternity of Sterling, a secret fraternal society which included the men's organizations of the Rock River Lodge No. 612 A. F. & A. M., Sterling Chapter No. 57 Royal Arch Masons, and Sterling Commandery No. 57 Knights Templar and the women's Sterling Chapter No. 354 Order of the Eastern Star. Built at the height of the "Golden Age of Fraternity"² when over five and a half million males in the United States belonged to fraternal groups such as the Freemasons, Odd Fellows, and Knights of Pythias, the Sterling Masonic Temple was part of the Freemasonry movement, a ritual-based fraternal brotherhood with roots stretching back to sixteenth-century Britain which reached its greatest strength in the United States in the last third of the nineteenth and first third of the twentieth centuries. Freemasonry was at the center of this Golden Age, as it was both the archetypical fraternal organization and the most successful one. As a setting for rituals, initiation ceremonies, degree work, banquets, and other social events of Freemasonry in Sterling, Illinois, the Sterling Masonic Temple is significant for Criterion A for social history. The Sterling Masonic Temple is one of the few remaining fraternal organization headquarters left in Sterling, Illinois, a city that boasted many fraternal organization buildings in its downtown in the early 1900s. The period of significance for Criterion A is 1900 when the building was dedicated to 1946, the fifty-year cutoff for the National Register of Historic Places.

History of Freemasonry and the Fraternal Movement

The oldest and most imitated fraternal order was Freemasonry. Founded in sixteenth-century England as a stonemason's guild, the group evolved into a drinking and eating club for tradesmen, merchants, and a few noblemen. The group's distinction was its focus on

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secrecy. Members used hand signals and passwords to identify one another and devised a legend about Hiram Abiff, the master mason of Solomon's Temple, who was assassinated by rivals and "raised" back to life. Eventually new members underwent a simple initiation, during which they learned the secret signals and heard Abiff's story.³

By the mid-1700s Freemasonry had spread through much of the western world. In the English colonies across the Atlantic Ocean the group largely became known as a drinking society. In America nearly all the lodges were located in taverns. Often the three degrees, or ritual ranks, were conferred in a single evening by members who, having lingered too long at the punch bowl, stumbled over the oaths and passwords. Their merrymaking often spilled beyond the tavern, and constables learned to exercise special vigilance on nights the "merry Masons" were abroad.⁴

In 1826 William Morgan, who had threatened to publish Masonic signs and lectures, violating his oath of secrecy, mysteriously disappeared. The order suffered tremendous losses in membership as ministers and politicians raged against the order about the mysterious disappearance. Public tumult ensued when it was learned that Governor De Witt Clinton of New York as well as many prominent prosecutors, judges, and jurors were members of the order. Politicians, insisting that both political parties had been tainted by the order, founded the nation's first third party, the Anti-Masonic party.⁵

Tens of thousands of Masons withdrew from the order and many lodges ceased meeting. But the Morgan episode indirectly reinvigorated the fraternal movement by turning it over to an emerging middle class of businessmen, clerks, lawyers, and doctors. Many ex-Freemasons joined the Odd Fellows, formerly a working-class club, and took control of it. They banned the use of alcohol, investigated the morals of prospective new members, and established an insurance system based on fixed weekly assessments to help needy members. The chief new purpose of the order became the promotion of initiation.⁶

Initiation ceremonies were drafted by a special committee on ritual, which included several former Freemasons. They wrote an hour-long pageant based loosely on the story of Genesis, with the initiate playing Adam. Because Adam was naked, the initiate's shirt was removed. "Thou art dust," he was told, and chains were wound around his body to symbolize his "guilty soul."⁷

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English officials of the Odd Fellows, who had formed the order in America were dumbfounded by this new emphasis on initiation and ritual. To them the lodge was a place for workers to unwind, perhaps over a tankard of beer, and to help one another when times were bad. Relations between the American and English lodges got so bad that by 1844 the Americans broke loose and established the "Independent" Order of Odd Fellows. A sequence of nine elaborate rituals, most of them derived from the Old Testament were created by the new order. The Odd Fellows grew from some thirty thousand members in 1843, to two hundred thousand by 1860, and nearly a million by 1900.⁸

American Freemasonry, following the Antimasonic crusade, developed along similar lines, creating and refining rituals. The first three degrees of Masonry, called the Blue Lodge degrees, culminated with raising an initiate to the status of Master Mason, and comprised the most commonly performed Masonic rituals. In these degrees, the master of the lodge played the role of King Solomon, metaphorically becoming King Solomon, and the lodge room becoming Solomon's temple. In many cases, the master would don an elaborate robe and crown to signal this transformation.⁹

In addition to the first three degrees of Freemasonry, American Masons could belong to many different degree-granting lodges, which by the mid-nineteenth century had been grouped into two different sets of degrees above the Blue Lodge rites: York Rite Freemasonry, with ten additional degrees conferred by three separate organizations (lodges affiliated with the Royal Arch, Royal and Select Master, and Knights Templar degree sequences); and Scottish Rite Masonry, with twenty-nine degrees conferred by the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. The numerous revisions and new rituals are credited for the order's growth from forty thousand members in the 1830s to nearly 750,000 by 1900. By 1925 the numbers of Freemasons were over three million men.¹⁰

During the 1860s and 1870s hundreds of fraternal organizers imitated the Odd Fellows and Freemasons and founded new orders including the Knights of Pythias and the Improved Order of Red Men. An official of the Knights of Pythias in 1887 attributed that order's growth to the rituals that had "taken hold of the hearts of men." Victorian insurance promoters, recognizing that men would more likely buy a policy if it came with evenings of initiation, created ritualistic beneficiary societies including the Modern Woodmen of America. As late as 1900 a half-million more Americans were insured by fraternal societies than by insurance companies. Even the Grand Army of the Republic, a veterans'

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organization offered three separate rituals and the Knights of Labor, the largest of the post-Civil War labor organizations, provided its membership with three lengthy ceremonies.¹¹

By the 1900s, historians estimate that from 30 to 40 percent of all adult men belonged to at least one of the nation's 70,000 lodges. Because only the highest-paid manual workers could afford the dues, paraphernalia, and initiation fees, and because Catholic lodge members were threatened with excommunication, the fraternal movement was chiefly an activity of middle-class Protestant men, many of whom belonged to several orders. Initiation was arguably their chief leisure activity.¹² In 1914, the 57 largest fraternal orders claimed a membership of over 15,600,000,¹³ although many individuals were active in a number of orders. By the mid-1920s, the peak of prosperity for the fraternal movement, it has been estimated that about one-half of the adult population of the country belonged to one or more of some 800 secret orders.¹⁴

During the last third of the nineteenth century millions of Freemasons underwent repeated initiations. Among the nearly one million Freemasons in 1903, more than 750,000 had experienced all three Blue Lodge degrees. Of these, 330,000 were members of Royal Arch lodges, which offered four additional degrees. Another 163,000 belonged to the Knights Templars, which conferred degrees eleven through thirteen of the York Rite. Statistics are more difficult to compile from the Scottish Rite due to a number of jurisdictional disputes.¹⁵

Many historians argue that the large portion of the American male population was drawn to fraternal organizations because the lodge room was perceived as a stage and the rituals enacted there as participatory theater. The evenings of ritual in the lodge room were community dramatics with which Masons entertained themselves in an America without movies, radio, television, or any of the other forms of today's modern entertainment. Masonic scholar H. R. Evans, a thirty-third degree Scottish Rite Mason supports this idea of Masonic ritual as theater, "The Masonic degrees from Entered Apprentice to Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret are dramas and should be so regarded by Masons."¹⁶ Many of the rituals often were performed in elaborate costumes and makeup. For example, the fellowcraft ritual of the second degree of the Blue Lodge of the Freemasons utilized a team of 31 members in full costume. At the height of the golden age of fraternalism between 1870 and 1930, scores of companies provided costumes and props for these productions.¹⁷

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Members and Masonic scholars not only explain the initiation rituals as theater but also interpret the lodge room as a religious realm. Although Freemasonry's status as a religious organization was hotly debated during the golden age of fraternity, the lodge room was repeatedly identified and treated as a sacred space by the order's members.¹⁸ A Mason from Kansas wrote in 1890, "Freemasonry is not only a brotherhood but a church. . . . It is an essential part of our ceremonies to joyfully recognize our relationship to God, our dependence upon Him, and to express our sense of need. A Masonic temple is a religious temple. The very word 'temple' implies worship."¹⁹ Members were admonished to conduct meetings as if conducting a church service.

This link between lodge rooms and churches is substantiated by the fact that at the end of the nineteenth century both forms of ritual space were furnished with the same furniture. Some furniture companies even issued two lines of catalogs offering the same merchandise labeling them in the ecclesiastical catalog as pulpit chairs while in the fraternal catalog they were called lodge chairs. Lodge rooms were furnished much like churches with an altar with a Bible, raised platforms with high-back, elaborately decorated chairs for officers of the fraternity, and oftentimes pews for seating of the other members. Decorative stained glass using many religious symbols as well as interior woodwork echoed church decoration.²⁰

The fraternal movement suffered greatly during the Depression of the 1930s. Many orders' members could not pay their dues and left the groups. Hundreds of smaller orders passed out of existence entirely and thousands of lodges, unable to meet mortgage payments, went bankrupt. The demise of the fraternal movement was not entirely caused by hard times, for the orders had been in trouble even during the prosperous decade of the 1920s as middle-class and better-educated men flocked to recreational clubs and service organizations. Critics explained that men were no longer interested in rituals full of ceremony and symbolism. The more enterprising lodges hosted dinner dances and recreational activities including billiards, card games, and sports tournaments. Others sought to replicate the success of service organizations such as the Rotary and Lions by undertaking charitable projects. But the long, elaborate rituals impinged on these activities. Men who wanted to join organizations primarily to enjoy themselves or to serve their community soon realized that organizations committed to long rituals were not suited to their purposes. Some orders shortened rituals or even abandoned them entirely to keep the organization going.²¹

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Two important exceptions to the decline of fraternalism were the Grange and Masons, which enjoyed a second period of growth after World War II, their membership peaking in the late 1940s and early 1950s, respectively. However, even these two did not significantly increase their number of lodges. The Blue Lodge once had a high of 4,103,161 Master Masons in 1959, but in 1979 that number had dropped to 3,200,000 members, a decline of 22 percent in twenty years.²²

Masonry has attracted many individuals of high social status including fourteen U. S. presidents: Washington, Monroe, Jackson, Polk, Buchanan, Andrew Johnson, Garfield, McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, Taft, Harding, Franklin Roosevelt, Truman, and Ford. Numerous governors, U. S. senators, and representatives have belonged to the Masons.²³

Masons in the Blue Lodge operate a number of homes for aged and infirm members. There is a Masonic home in virtually every state. The Scottish Rite operates a number of Shriner's Hospitals for the care of children. In addition to taking care of their own, Masons on occasion make contributions to various public charities and civic or educational endeavors. In the past Masons participated in numerous public cornerstone-laying ceremonies harkening the fraternity back to its medieval roots as stonemason's guild.²⁴

History of Freemasonry in Sterling

The history of Freemasonry in Sterling began when the community was still in its infancy. Founded only 22 years earlier, the village was composed of a few houses, general stores, and offices when nine men gathered on the night of June 24, 1856 to form the Sterling Lodge Number 202, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons (A. F. and A. M.). The records of the lodge did not record where the first meeting was held. At the lodge's first election, Edward N. Kirk was elected worshipful master; Joseph Ward, senior warden; Hiram Holmes, junior warden; Nathaniel G. Reynolds, treasurer; E. G. Allen, secretary; and Manson Robbins, tyler.

Many of the members later served in the Union Army during the Civil War. The lodge flourished only 12 years. It is not known why the lodge ceased to operate. During the lodge's existence, a total of 89 names appeared on the books as having been members. The last meeting of the organization was held on August 11, 1868.²⁵

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The following year, the first organizational meeting of the Rock River Lodge Number 612 A. F. & A. M. was held the evening of October 5, 1869 in the Boynton House (demolished), in Sterling, Illinois. The first officers of Rock River Lodge No. 612 were M. S. Bowman, worshipful master; George L. Kline, senior warden; N. W. Brown, junior warden; Andrew J. Tuller, treasurer; Robert Lawrie, secretary; and W. S. Peebles, senior deacon.

A lodge room was fitted up immediately in the Boynton House for the new organization. Later, as the organization increased its membership, the room became too small and when Hull and Ingersoll erected a new three story building at northwest corner of Third and A Streets, the lodge rented the second and third stories immediately. Charles Bent, editor of the 1877 History of Whiteside County, Illinois wrote: "The lodge room is beautifully furnished with Brussels carpet, and elegant and appropriate furniture. It is lighted with gas, the chandeliers being rich and heavy. In size and appointments it is equal to any in this section of the State."²⁶

The Sterling Chapter No. 57 Royal Arch Masons was chartered in October 1859. The Royal Arch Masons also met in the Masonic quarters.

In 1884, thirty-four Sir Knights from Sterling who were members of the Dixon Commandery No. 21 Knights Templars, petitioned the Grand Commander, James G. Elwood to organize a commandery to be known as the Sterling Commandery. The first meeting was held on March 10, 1884 and officers were elected. After visits by the Grand Commander Elwood along with Sir Knights from Chicago, Aurora, Sycamore, Dixon and Rock Island who witnessed the local unit's work in the Red Cross degree and the Order of the Temple a charter was granted on October 29, 1884 naming 53 Sir Knights of the Sterling Commandery. The Sterling Commandery No. 57 Knights Templar also met in the Masonic quarters.²⁷

As years passed, the rented quarters at the Hull and Ingersoll Building became too crowded and members of the lodge began to look for a new home of their own. On July 10, 1886 the group purchased the former Wallace Opera House building from John and Maria Davis. The former opera house was erected by Hugh Wallace in 1857 for a public hall. In 1878 it was remodelled for James M. Wallace into an opera house. The Wallace Opera House was a popular theater and performance venue in northwestern Illinois. The Hull and

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Ingersoll Building later became home to the Sterling Loyal Order of Moose, a fraternal organization in the early 1900s. The building was later demolished.

The four story brick Wallace Opera House building with basement faced north on Third Street and plans were immediately made to remodel the rooms into suitable headquarters for the lodge. The second story of the building became the lodge rooms. In 1893 the building was again remodeled by the Masons. A two story lodge room was created on the third and fourth stories. The December 30, 1898 Sterling Evening Gazette reported, "The main Masonic hall was the most beautiful room in Sterling, . . . gorgeously frescoed and lighted by dozens of incandescent lights. The carpets and decorations, as well as the insignia of the order were of the best and the whole arrangement was splendid."²⁸

On July 8, 1896, the Sterling Chapter No. 354 Order of Eastern Star was instituted at the request of a group of Sterling Masons and their wives. Twenty-six charter members were installed during the afternoon session at the Masonic Lodge quarters. Following the session, all members and guests assembled at the Galt House in Sterling for a banquet. The members and guests returned to the Masonic Lodge and the chapter was opened by members of the Minerva Chapter, Prophetstown Order of Eastern Star and the officers were installed in the various stages. On October 14, 1896, a charter was granted by the Grand Chapter of Illinois and by December 1896 the chapter had 37 members.²⁹

On a blustery, cold winter night on Thursday, December 29, 1898, fire of an unknown origin gutted the Masonic lodge quarters in the former Wallace Opera House. The estimated total loss of the various Masonic groups; the Sterling Club, a social club which rented quarters on the second floor; and Charles E. Windom's furniture and undertaking stock on the first floor and basement was at \$33,800. The losses included uniforms, regalia, furnishings, cases, banners, charters, and most of the records of the various Masonic groups.³⁰

The fire was discovered around 12:45 a.m. and both Sterling and Rock Falls Fire Departments responded to the call. The fireman fought the flames until 8 a.m. and succeeded in saving the billiard and reading rooms of the Sterling Club on the second story, the front part of the Masonic rooms on the third and fourth stories, and the front floor and basement of Charles E. Windom's store. The floors of the Masonic banquet room on the fourth floor, the Masonic anterooms on the third floor, and the Sterling Club's ball room

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on the second floor fell through and were totally consumed by the fire. The walls were apparently left in good shape for rebuilding.³¹

Members of the various Masonic groups and the Sterling Club quickly found quarters in other halls throughout town following the fire. At a special meeting of the Rock River Lodge A. F. & A. M. on January 13, 1899, the following resolution was adopted:

"Resolved, that committee be appointed consisting of the first three officers of the Blue Lodge, Chapter and Commandery, to act with the trustees, who shall select a building committee who shall have power to obtain plans and specifications for rebuilding Masonic Temple, said plans and specifications to be presented to first committee for approval and when so approved to proceed with the work as rapidly as possible."³²

On March 9, 1899 the Masonic building committee met and reviewed plans from architects E. E. Roberts of Oak Park, Illinois; George W. Ashby of Riverside, Illinois; Mr. Rice of Clinton, Iowa; Mr. Hair of Galesburg, Illinois; and P. T. VanHorne of Sterling. After reviewing the various plans the committee selected Ashby's plans with the understanding that P. T. VanHorne would supervise the work. Some slight modifications were submitted for the plans and as soon as the plans were revised then bids would be let out for the construction of the building.³³

Architect George W. Ashby

George W. Ashby was born on October 28, 1860 in LaFayette, Indiana. He attended Purdue University and in 1880 he moved to Chicago to apprentice with architect William LeBaron Jenney a pioneer of the metal-frame skyscraper in Chicago. In 1887 Ashby moved to Riverside, Illinois where Jenney also had his home. Ashby moved to Berwyn in 1893 where he resided for the rest of his life.

Ashby designed a variety of structures with many stylistic influences including the Chateausque, Romanesque Revival, Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, and Prairie School styles. He designed houses, barns, commercial buildings, fraternal buildings, and civic buildings.

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In 1895 Ashby designed the Riverside City Hall at Riverside and Burling Streets in Riverside, Illinois. The brick and stone Chateausque and Romanesque influenced building has a pyramidal roofed corner tower with conical roofed corner towers on the other street corners. The building is capped by a steeply-pitched hipped roof with hipped roof dormers. The first story walls are stone while the second and third story walls are brick. Ashby was also the general contractor for the manse of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Riverside designed by Jarvis Hunt.

By 1896 Ashby was living at 3409 South Oak Park Avenue in Berwyn, Illinois (just east of Riverside) with his offices being located in Riverside.³⁴ In the late 1890s Ashby designed a Classical Revival styled house for F. O. Butler at 230 East First Avenue in Hinsdale, Illinois. The brick, two-and-a-half story stone and brick house had a two-tiered porch with classical inspired columns, palladian windows, and a recessed corner porch. Also in the late 1890s Ashby designed a Flemish inspired warehouse building for the McCormick Display Company at 2423-2433 West 17th Street in Chicago, Illinois. The large brick and stone building has a Flemish stepped gable with a large medallion.

In 1902-1903 Ashby joined architect William C. Radford of Riverside and formed the Radford Architectural Company of Riverside (later Chicago), Illinois. The Radford Architectural Company provided mail-order architectural plans. The company proclaimed itself "The Largest Architectural Establishment in the World,"³⁵ prepared to supply complete plans and specifications for over one thousand different kinds of buildings. For only \$8 to \$15 they would supply what architects charged \$75 to \$100 for plans. Their catalogs were in fact small books and included plans and elevations for hundreds of different designs for houses, garages, commercial buildings, and outbuildings.

Radford obviously aimed to provide the widest possible range of designs, everything from simple two-room cottages to stylish three and four story residences. Ashby provided a variety of plans for the 1903 The Radford American Homes including Four Square, Hall and Parlor, Gable Front, and Gabled Ell types and Queen Anne, Classical Revival, Colonial Revival high style designs.³⁶ It is not known how long Ashby was associated with the Radford Architectural Company. W. H. Schroeder also provided many plans for the Radford Architectural Company.

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In 1904 Ashby designed the Maywood Public Library at 121 South Fifth Street, Maywood, Illinois. The two-and-a-half story brick Classical Revival styled building was funded by philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. In 1910 Ashby designed the Cicero Fire Department's main station at 5303 West 25th Street in Cicero, Illinois. The Spanish Colonial Revival influenced building had a square corner tower, tiled mansard roof with a gabled front dormer, and arched recessed windows. That same year Ashby also designed the Cicero Fire Station No 4 at the northwest corner of 49th Avenue and 30th Place in Cicero, Illinois. The Spanish Colonial Revival influenced building had a tiled mansard roof with corner brick piers with decorative shields. In 1913-1914, Ashby designed the Clinton Township Public Library at the southeast corner of Elm and U. S. Route 30 in Waterman, DeKalb County, Illinois. The one-and-a-half story brick and stucco building has both Classical Revival and Craftsman influences. In 1922 Ashby designed a residence for B. L. Johnson at 6949 South Bennett Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. The two story, Four Square brick and stone residence has a small enclosed front porch and a recessed arched main entryway.³⁷

Sometime in the early 1920s Ashby formed an architectural firm with his son, Wilberte and a Mr. Schultz and named the firm Ashby, Ashby, and Schultz. The firm was known for their many public school designs in the western suburbs of Chicago. For the community of Riverside, the firm designed an addition to Central School, Hauser Junior High School, Ames School, Hollywood School, and the first Riverside-Brookfield High School. George W. Ashby died on March 5, 1933 at his home in Berwyn, Illinois.

Chateausque Architecture

George W. Ashby designed a Chateausque styled building for the new Sterling Masonic Temple using as much as feasible of the remaining stone foundation and brick walls to trim costs. The Chateausque style is often called the Francis I style as it owes much to the reign of the French king (1515-1547) when Italian Renaissance ideas and classical forms were combined with the native Gothic architecture. However, the style also contains a mixture of earlier, fifteenth-century French elements that the term, Chateausque is preferred.³⁸

France began a revival of the Francis I style in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, and the first American chateau inspired house was designed by Detlef Lienau for LeGrand Lockwood at South Norwalk, Connecticut. It was built in 1864-1868. Fifteen

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years later, Ecole des Beaux-Arts graduate Richard Morris Hunt designed a house for William K. Vanderbilt on Fifth Avenue in New York. The house was described by architectural critic Montgomery Schuyler as "An attempt to summarize in one building the history of a most active and fruitful century in the history of architecture, which included the late Gothic of the fifteenth century and the early Renaissance of the sixteenth, and spanned the distance from the minute and complicated modelling of the Palais de Justice at Rouen and the Hotel Cluny at Paris, to the romantic classicism of the great chateaux of the Loire."³⁹

Hunt became a leader of the Chateausque movement and the Vanderbilt family its leading patrons. Among its highlights was the construction of Biltmore, near Asheville, North Carolina by Hunt for George Washington Vanderbilt in 1890-1895. Other American architects who designed Chateausque styled buildings included George B. Post and Stanford White. The style was not highly popular as it took talented architects to carefully mix Renaissance and Late Gothic details for successful new designs. The Chateausque style was used primarily for architect-designed houses. Few examples of institutional, fraternal, or commercial Chateausque buildings are found throughout the country. Most Chateausque buildings were constructed from the late 1880s through the early 1900s.⁴⁰

Chateausque styled buildings are of masonry construction with brick or stone or a combination of both. Many have asymmetrical plans and silhouettes with high, steep-sided hipped or mansard roofs rising to a ridge or flat top. The roofs are sometimes capped by metal railings or cresting. Round turrets corbelled out from the walls at upper floor levels with conical roofs are often used. High, pinnacled gabled dormers sometimes having decorative tracery are often used to enliven the silhouette of the buildings. Decorative pinnacles are also used. Windows often have heavy lintels or basket-handle arches. Vertical mullions divide the narrow windows with transoms above.⁴¹

George W. Ashby designed the Sterling Masonic Temple using the same perimeters of the former Masonic Temple building. Three-story brick commercial buildings were located on either side of the building. Since the side elevations of the temple were to adjoin the neighboring buildings, the only major decorative exterior work was done on the front facade. A new front facade with a storefront with a central entry was placed at the first story. Ashby combined brick with decorative stone work for the facade. Four triangular stone and brick buttresses rise from the top of the first story storefront to provide bases for

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decorative terra cotta griffins reminiscent of gargoyles. Wide and narrow stone stringcourses separate the second, and third stories. Many of the windows have narrow brick mullions and small transoms above. Many of the windows have wide stone hoods with rounded corners and keystones. Four corbelled brick and stone buttresses are repeated at the third story and they appear to support three steeply pitched gable dormers centered above on the fourth story. The dormers are highly decorated with stone and copper gables with low-relief moldings and have elaborate pinnacles. The gables are capped by crosses. Smaller gabled dormers on either side of the central dormers have decorative tracery, pinnacles, and crosses. The high silhouette of the roof is seen for many blocks throughout downtown Sterling.

Among the Chateausque details on the building are the high, steeply pitched mansard roof with its steeply-pitched gabled dormers with decorative moldings and elaborate pinnacles. Corbelled, brick and stone buttresses with decorative terra cotta griffins are another Chateausque feature. The building's walls are constructed of stone and brick, a Chateausque feature. The blond brick, a less expensive building material than stone, was chosen to mimic stone construction. Many of the windows are divided by narrow brick mullions with transoms above. The windows have wide stone hoods with rounded corners and keystones. The Sterling Masonic Temple is the only known Chateausque building in Sterling, Illinois. The use of the Chateausque style by Ashby symbolically connected the Masonic fraternity to its Medieval origins with the building's mix of Gothic and Renaissance ideas and forms including the highly decorative pinnacles, gabled dormers, and griffins.

Architecture of Masonic Lodge Buildings

Masonic lodge buildings can be found which show features of the Gothic Revival, Greek Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Romanesque Revival, Chateausque, Classical Revival, Mission, or Colonial Revival styles. Albert Mackey, a leading nineteenth-century Masonic scholar wrote:

"Of all the styles of architecture, the Gothic is that which is most intimately connected with the history of Freemasonry, having been the system peculiarly practiced by the Freemasons (guilds) of the Middle Ages."⁴²

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Gothic Revival would seem the logical choice for the building of lodge halls due to the fraternity's Medieval origins. However, when the Masonic ritual and mythology was being developed in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, classical styles predominated. A set of classical columns is a part of the furniture of every Masonic lodge room.⁴³

The one architectural period which is most often emphasized by the Masons is the Egyptian, because of its association with Solomon's Temple and other ancient mysteries of that geographic area. Egyptian architecture first became widely known in the early nineteenth century, when Masonic rituals were being elaborated. However, Egyptian detailing is rarely visible on the exteriors of halls but may be found in some lodge interiors.⁴⁴

The central, urban setting of the Sterling Masonic Temple is typical of fraternal orders' halls built from the 1840s to about 1920. Lodge halls, except for halls used by the Grange, a rural, agricultural based organization, were almost invariably located in the commercial core of a municipality. The central location manifested the prestige and urbanity of an order, attracted prime tenants to rent store spaces in the halls providing income for the order, and were convenient for members to attend lodge functions.⁴⁵ After World War I, halls tended to be built away from the commercial core, usually near the commercial-residential boundary. The common-wall commercial style lodge buildings gave way to isolated structures, perhaps surrounded by some grass and landscaping.⁴⁶

The ritual requirements of the lodge room was a controlling feature in the evolution of lodge hall design. The Masons, the nation's archetypical fraternal organization, established the pattern for hall design used by many fraternal orders.⁴⁷ In 1886, at the dedication of the Masonic Temple in Waterbury, Connecticut, J. W. Richards called the lodge room "a soul within a tabernacle of clay." He said it was here that "Masonic thought and activity are born; here that life courses which gives meaning to all the externals."⁴⁸ William D. Moore described the importance of the lodge room, "The lodge room was where Masonic rituals were enacted. It was where the abstract idea of a fraternity of men took concrete form, and where a lodge defined itself."⁴⁹

According to Moore certain characteristics of the Masonic lodge room rarely varied. As a rule, the room was above street level, was longer than it was wide, had a high ceiling, symmetrically placed doors on one end, and an altar in its center.⁵⁰ Space within the lodge room was ordered around a pair of axes evident in a diagram by Malcolm C. Duncan in

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Duncan's Masonic Ritual and Monitor, a guide to the Masonic ritual from the second half of the nineteenth century.⁵¹

William D. Moore in "The Masonic Lodge Room, 1870-1930: A Sacred Space of Masculine Spiritual Hierarchy" wrote about the space and the focus of the two axes,

"The primary axis runs down the center of the length of the room. Starting at the letter G on the wall—a symbol denoting both God and geometry—the axis runs through the master, through the altar, and ends with the senior warden, sitting with his back to the viewer. The secondary axis is perpendicular to the primary one, and runs from the junior warden on the right through the altar to the far wall splitting the room in the other direction. The presence of the axes is further emphasized by the elevated platforms meant for the officers' chairs on three sides of the lodge rooms. Everything in the lodge room is organized around these two axes. A person's or an object's relative proximity to the axes was directly related to their ritual significance.

The axes terminate in the chairs of the officers, of the worshipful master, the senior warden and the junior warden. These chairs both define the ends of the axes and ennoble the men who occupy them. This double function of the officers' chairs resulted in their assuming exaggerated proportions. The backs of these chairs . . . often stretched to more than six feet in height. They took on monumental scale in order to attract attention, since their positioning identified the ends of the axes and defined the space within the room. The importance of these seats and their occupants was further emphasized by their traditionally dictated location upon platforms that were raised a ritually significant number of steps above the main floor. These exaggerated, elevated ornamental seats served as benchmarks by which members understood their positioning within the ritual space.

Just as the officers' chairs marked them as significant, the greater portion of the lodge members occupied seating furniture that indicated their identical organizational status. Members' settees . . . also would be located on the platforms around the perimeters of the lodge room These seats were the institutional equalizers, the material manifestations of the Masons' ideology of

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equality. Whether a brother was a bank president or a ditch digger, if he was not a lodge officer, he sat with the rest of his brethren on these settees.

Significantly, the members' seats faced the center of the room. This arrangement allowed the members of a lodge to see one another, to know who their brothers were, and to be witnesses to one another's presence. . . .

The Masonic floor plan, . . . assured the brethren that they were part of a group. It encouraged them to witness one another's presence and to conceive of the lodge as a corporate body composed of individuals. . . .

As ritual hierarchy of space was determined by proximity to the central axes of the room, the most significant position in the room was located where the axes intersected. This sacred space was reserved for the altar and the Bible. All seats faced this spot (the altar). . . . This is the position in the room where initiates took their oaths¹⁵²

Moore then proceeds to describe the importance of the placing of the lodge room above the street level to exclude outsiders from the proceedings of the fraternity.

"The act of incorporating individuals into a fraternal organization simultaneously excluded all others. Inclusion and exclusion were complementary effects of the same action. The lodge room was organized to promote the act of incorporation, but it was also arrayed to reinforce the definition of the corporate body. The lodge room was designed to shut out the exterior world and outsiders. Windows were either nonexistent or rendered impervious to vision by shutters or stained glass. In most cases, lodge-room windows were so far above street level that there was no risk of outside observers."¹⁵³

Dennis Reed Brownridge in his dissertation "Secret Societies and Their Impact on the Architectural Landscape of the West," also echoes this ritual requirement in lodge hall design of the concern for secrecy.

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"The oldest secrecy-insuring measure, which has had the most profound influence on the character of the lodge hall, is the practice of meeting on an upper floor, to prevent eavesdroppers from peering in windows. This seems to have been an established tradition before fraternalism was introduced into America. . . ."⁵⁴

Albert Mackey in his 1906 Lexicon and History of Freemasonry, writes about the upper floor requirement for the location of the lodge room,

"It (a lodge room) should also be isolated, wherever it is practicable, from all surrounding buildings, and should always be placed on an upper story. No lodge should ever be held on the ground floor."⁵⁵

The building of the lodge room on an upper story, because of the desire for secrecy, allowed a lodge to rent the first floor for commercial space, giving the lodge a steady source of income. Attracting good tenants was easy because of the hall's central location and quality of construction, and it was not long before lodges were erecting buildings as an investment. The anticipated income enabled them to build much finer lodge rooms than might have been the case.⁵⁶

Another security measure that had an effect on hall design was the placing of a guard, known to the Masons as the Tyler, a symbolic reference to the act of sealing off a building from the outside world when the tiles of the roof are installed. The Tyler was placed outside the door to the lodge room in an anteroom. The Tyler would greet visitors and "test" strangers for admittance to the lodge room. Next to the Tyler's room with its own entrance to the lodge room was the Preparation room. A room in which candidates were "prepared" prior to initiation. Since the officers seated opposite the Master were ceremonially involved with persons entering from these anterooms, it was important that the rooms be located at the end of the lodge room, rather than a side. This further lengthened the building and gave the hall a very linear plan. Lodge buildings built from the 1920s on however, often had anterooms on the side, giving the building a more squarish plan.⁵⁷

Another feature which distinguished lodge halls from other commercial buildings was the height of the facade. A taller than usual story-height and a higher than usual parapet wall

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or false front emphasized the verticality of the lodge building. Leaders of the order often placed emphasis on the ceiling height including Albert Mackey who wrote,

"The ceiling should be lofty, to give dignity to the appearance of the hall as well as for the purposes of health, by compensating. . . . for the inconveniences of closed windows."⁵⁸

The height of the facade was often additionally emphasized by the use of tall false-fronts, parapet walls, or cornices giving the lodge buildings a monumental appearance, to a greater degree and for a longer time than was elsewhere fashionable.⁵⁹

According to William D. Moore, lodge rooms were often decorated in historical motifs so that the Masons could separate themselves temporally and spatially from the outside world.

Revivalist styles found on the furniture and wall decorations allowed the Masons to leave the present and lose themselves in a romanticized past. The main lodge room of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia was lavishly decorated in the Egyptian Revival style by prominent interior designer, George Herzog.⁶⁰

The legends and tales of Masonry, told through its numerous rituals, traced the organization throughout history, stretching back at least to the building of King Solomon's Temple, but in some cases back to Adam himself. Different episodes of the organizational history claimed as ancestors the Egyptians, the ancient Jews, Islamic Arabs, the knights of the crusades, the builders of medieval cathedrals, the architects of England's architectural renaissance, and America's founding fathers. By citing a particular aspect of the fraternity's history, the Masons could appropriately decorate their temples in the Egyptian, Gothic, Persian, Norman, Georgian, or Colonial styles. In the largest temples, such as those built in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Brooklyn, multiple lodge rooms were located in the same structure and each room was decorated in a different historical style. These buildings materially expressed the organization's ideology of universality and literally surrounded the membership with the message.⁶¹

Sterling Masonic Temple

The Sterling Masonic Temple was typical of Masonic halls in its design and layout with its lodge room located above the street level, being longer than it was wide, having a high

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ceiling, symmetrically placed doors on one end, and an altar in its center. By placing the lodge room on the third floor because of the concern for secrecy, the renting of space on the first and second floors to businesses and the Sterling Club gave the lodge a steady source of income. Contact with the outside world was shut off by the placing of the lodge room on the third floor as people would have to climb two full flights of stairs to reach the room. The tyler's room, preparation room, commandery room, members' gallery, and walkway completely surrounded the lodge room from the exterior world and outsiders. Stained glass windows on the interior north and south walls were lit by exterior windows of the building allowing no views by the public into the lodge room.

The building's height was stressed by the verticality of the steeply-pitched gabled domers, pinnacles, and mansard roof. The high silhouette of the roof dominated the downtown of Sterling. The elaborately decorated facade gave the building a monumental appearance. The tall ceiling height of the lodge room with its vast two story space, and recessed vaults also added to the building's height.

The lodge room interior is decorated in a Gothic Revival style. With its hammer-beam, trussed roof, the room is reminiscent of Gothic cathedrals commonly associated with the beginnings of Freemasonry in the Middle Ages. Gothic Revival styled carved tracery with quatrefoils is located between the curved braces and ceiling. The use of the Gothic Revival style allowed the Sterling Masons to leave the present and lose themselves in a romanticized past by participating in elaborate ritual ceremonies in the lodge room.

The room is laid out with two principal axes. The primary north-south axis runs down the center of the length of the room. Starting at the letter G on the wall, the axis run through the master, through the altar in the center, and ends with the senior warden. The secondary axis, which is perpendicular to the primary one runs east-to-west from the junior warden on the east through the altar in the center to the far wall. Elevated platforms with large throne-like chairs are provided for the master, senior warden, and junior warden which attracts attention and emphasized the hierarchy of their positions. The placing of the altar in the center of the room at the junction of the two principal axes emphasized the privileged incorporation to new initiates to the fraternity and its many degrees. Other members' benches and chairs are placed in the members' gallery on the west side and around the perimeter of the room, facing the center of the room to witness the lodge's rituals and meeting activities and reinforcing the idea of a lodge as a corporate body.

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Masonic Buildings in the State of Illinois

No comprehensive survey of Masonic halls has been conducted in the state of Illinois, however, these buildings represent typical Masonic halls and temples found throughout the country that were built in downtowns during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These halls were chosen for discussion based on the author's personal observations of a few Masonic buildings.

Other Masonic halls in the state of Illinois include the Vermont Masonic Hall, Vermont, Fulton County, Illinois which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Vermont Masonic Hall is located in the downtown business district and was built in 1891-1892. The two-story brick building has an elaborate stamped sheet metal High Victorian Gothic styled facade with three-dimensional, gothic arch detailing. A hardware store occupies the first floor of the building while the lodge's headquarters is located on the second story. The interior of the main lodge room features elaborate original painted, fabricated pattern pressed sheet metal panels and moldings fitted together on the walls from the baseboards to the ceiling and over the entire ceiling itself.

The Cuba, Fulton County, Illinois, Masonic Hall is located on the west side of the public square and was built in 1888. The two-story brick building has a sheet metal parapet and gothic arched second story window with blue, leaded stained glass. The main lodge room interior on the second floor was renovated in the 1950s with new paneling and a lowered ceiling but the original raised platforms and blue, leaded stained glass behind the master's station still exist. The Cuba Masonic Lodge is currently undergoing fundraising to restore the interior back to its original splendor.

The Ipava, Fulton County, Illinois, Masonic Hall is located in the downtown commercial district on the north side of the public square. The two story brick building was built in 1926 following a disastrous fire which destroyed nearly the entire north side of the square. The first floor has a commercial space, currently occupied by the village of Ipava as a village hall, while the Masonic lodge occupies the second floor. The main lodge room has plain plastered walls and a dropped ceiling.

The Delavan, Tazewell County, Illinois, Masonic Hall was built in c. early 1880s. The two story brick building is located in the downtown commercial district which is listed in the

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National Register of Historic Places. The building has an elaborate sheet metal cornice, a large second-story turret that cantilevers out over the sidewalk, and the entire second story is covered with pressed sheet metal with a brick pattern. A commercial business occupies the first floor while the Masonic lodge occupies the second story.

The Streator, LaSalle County, Illinois Masonic Temple is located on North Park Street, on the west side of City Park near the commercial-residential boundary of the city. The 1920s two story Classical Revival-styled brick building is nearly square in shape. The main lodge rooms are on the second story of the building.

Building of the Sterling Masonic Temple

Sterling in 1899 was a growing city that stretched along the Rock River for over three miles and extended north of the river for over a mile at the time of the Masonic Temple's construction. Sixteen large factories located along the banks of the river provided much of the impetus for the city's growth with numerous small shops making a variety of goods. The city was lighted by electricity provided by a dam and power plant on the Rock River. Many of the blocks were lined with concrete walks and there were over 21 miles of macadamized roads. The main street was paved with brick. There were sixteen churches in town and a Y.M.C.A. Many lecture courses, women's clubs and literary societies were all represented as well as the many fraternal men's organizations.⁶²

On June 2, 1899, the building committee of the Sterling Masonic Lodge accepted the bid of J. H. Cullen for \$11,000 for the construction of the building. However, Cullen was not able to put up the proper bond and bids were relet for the construction. The \$13,029 bid of T. P. Ruth was accepted by the building committee on July 10, 1899. Bonds were to be issued by the Lodge, Chapter, and Commandery for the amount of \$15,000 available at \$50 each. However, at the meeting of the building committee on September 15, 1899, the committee reported that the building's trustees had already secured a loan of \$10,000 from J. S. Miller and that the remainder could be raised by issuing \$125 bonds to the members. This action was approved. Bonds were later issued for buying furnishings for the new temple.⁶³

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The January 16, 1900 Sterling Standard reported that,

"The work on the new Masonic Temple is being rapidly pushed to completion. The work on the outside is nearly finished. The studding for the partitions on the second, third and fourth floors is all in, while the work of lathing has commenced. It will probably not be over a month before the big building will be entirely completed."⁶⁴

The March 30, 1900 Sterling Standard reported that,

"The work on the interior of the new Masonic Temple is being pushed rapidly. A large force of carpenters is at work. It is thought the work in the lodge rooms will be finished this week and that the club rooms will be ready for occupancy within the next few days. The lower floor will be the last to be finished. The design of the woodwork in the lodge rooms is especially beautiful. The ceiling is by far the handsomest in the city, or in this vicinity for that matter. The paneling is all of a beautiful pattern and the door and window casings are of a simple, massive type which is most pleasing. The wood work in the club rooms, though not so elaborate as above, is just as beautiful in its way. . . . The Masons and the Sterling Club will have two of the finest homes of the kind in this part of the state."⁶⁵

On April 13, 1900, F. H. Geyer, T. W. Beckwith, and J. W. Platt were named to make arrangements for the dedication of the new temple. W. S. McCloy, E. K. Jenkins, H. C. Ward, J. W. Niles, and Judd Decker later were appointed to the committee to help with the dedication ceremonies.

The temple was dedicated the evening of May 16, 1900, by Most Worshipful Grand Master Charles H. Hitchcock of Peoria, Illinois. Over 150 Masons were present from the Sterling Masonic groups and nearby towns and cities. The dedication ceremonies included a performance by the Masonic quartette, speech by Charles Hitchcock, dedication rituals by the Grand Lodge, and an address by C. C. Johnson. Following the dedication a banquet was served in the dining rooms on the fourth floor.⁶⁶

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History of the Sterling Masonic Temple

The second floor of the new Masonic Temple was leased to the Sterling Club. The Sterling Club, a social organization, was established on January 12, 1893 and rented quarters in the Masonic Temple. Much of the Sterling Club's furnishings were destroyed by the December 29, 1898 fire. The club was founded to provide a place for rest, fellowship, and recreation for its male members. Its facilities in the new Masonic Temple included a billiard room, reading room supplied with daily newspapers and current magazines, and a banquet and ball room. The club sponsored many Friday night banquets and dances for members and their guests. The rooms of the second floor facility were open to club members from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. The current membership of the club in 1908 was 110. The club later moved out of the Sterling Masonic Temple around 1919. The club eventually disbanded.

The Rock River Lodge #612, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons was the largest lodge group that occupied the Sterling Masonic Temple. The Rock River Lodge #612 provided the first three initiation degrees of the Masonic Blue Lodge which culminated in the Master of Masonry degree. The principal business of the lodge was initiating members in the first three initiation degrees. Minutes of the Rock River Lodge #612 noted the establishment in 1900 of an Executive Committee comprised of the worshipful master of the Rock River Lodge #612, the high priest of Sterling Chapter #57 Royal Arch Masons, and the eminent commander of the Sterling Commandery #57 Knights Templar who was in charge of the real estate and building, including leasing the first two floors to tenants, paying all bills for the construction of the building, and keeping the property in repair. This committee later became known as the Sterling Masonic Temple Association. The Rock River Lodge #612 met on the first and third Thursday of every month at 7:30 p.m.

Minutes of the Rock River Lodge #612 record degrees awarded during monthly meetings, charitable appeals including nursing care and burial costs for lodge members and public charitable causes such as tornado, flood, and war relief efforts. Among the actions taken by the lodge were the leasing of the first floor and basement to Charles E. Windom who owned a furniture store in the early 1900s, the lodge voted to lower the rent from \$60 a month to \$40 on March 7, 1902. Other actions of the lodge include:

December 30, 1903. A brother of the lodge was sent \$25 towards his health care at a Chicago hospital.

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October 7, 1904. \$50 was appropriated from the lodge funds towards purchasing a piano for the lodge room.

July 7, 1905. Lodge membership was at 233.

April 20, 1906. Brother Ferguson spoke "feelingly" of the earthquake and calamity at San Francisco. On a motion the sum of \$25 was ordered to sent to assist in relieving the suffering of our brethren in the stricken city.

February 1, 1907. Escorted body of deceased brother to the C.N.W. depot. The Worshipful Master and pall bearers went with the remaint to Morrison, Illinois to be buried.

July 5, 1907. Membership was up to 244.

December 20, 1907. On a motion the Worshipful Master was instructed to act with others of the Masonic Executive Committee in relation to furnishing a room in the new Sterling Hospital.

October 1, 1909. A communication was read from brother, J. M. McFatrigh asking for funds to help build a monument for deceased brother Gil. W. Barnard. It was moved and adopted to send \$10 for that purpose.

December 3, 1909. The Most Worshipful Grand Master made an appeal for charity for the needy sufferers of the Cherry Mine disastaer. Brother Stoeckle moved that we send \$10 for their relief. The motion carried unaminously.

May 15, 1914. Granted request for assistance from a member with entering the Masonic Home at Sullivan, Illinois. The chapter voted unaminously also to pay his train fare each way and provide two sets of clothing.

November 12, 1915. Lodge held banquet with Order of Eastern Star serving. 135 members attended with 15 visitors present.

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September 1, 1917. Endowment trust fund established for the Masonic Home in Sullivan, Illinois; Royal Arch Memorial Hospital in Sullivan, Illinois; and the Masonic Orphan's Home in LaGrange, Illinois.

November 2, 1917. On a recommendation for the State of Illinois Grand Master urging all lodges and individuals to purchase Liberty Bonds to the extent of their ability and a call for each lodge to donate not less than \$1 per member, with the money to be distributed for the benefit of the members of the Illinois lodges that are in the service of the U. S. government on foreign soil, the lodge voted to begin collection of funds.

April 19, 1918. Upon a unanimous vote of the members, the \$82 difference between the number of members (369) and the amount of money (\$287) contributed thus far to the Lodge War Fund was taken from lodge treasury.

June 8, 1918. Unanimous vote to pay dues of members in the armed services.
October 11, 1918. Civil authorities placed a ban on all lodge meetings because of the influenza epidemic.

The Proceedings of the Most Worship Grand Lodge, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, State of Illinois, of the 81st annual meeting held in Chicago on October 12-14, 1920 reported that Rock River Lodge #612 had a total of 411 members in 1919. 26 men became new members that year and there were 27 initiations. The membership in 1920 was 422.

Unfortunately, records from 1920 through 1942 have been misplaced for the Rock River Lodge #612. The lodge regularly met in the Sterling Masonic Temple during this time with their chief activities being the initiation of new members in their three degrees, providing financial assistance to distressed and deceased members of the organization, and providing funds for the Masonic Home and Hospital in Sullivan, Illinois. The records of the organization resume on December 3, 1943.

February 18, 1944. A motion was unanimously passed that all dues of members serving in the Armed Force would be remitted by the lodge.

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October 20, 1944. Requests for donations to the war fund for \$10 and Boy Scouts of America for \$10 were unanimously approved. The Temple Association was given \$400 for repairs to the building.

October 5, 1946. A play "Rose on the Altar" was given by the Moline Consistory commemorating the 77th anniversary of Rock River Lodge #612.

Sterling resident, Orville Davis, a member of the Rock River Lodge # 612 since 1942 remembers the lodge as being a very active organization. Davis recalls going down to the lodge where 3 to 4 fellows would be around daily to coach members in the ritual degree ceremonies. Members of the lodge would generally be around in the afternoon and evenings to play cards, billiards, and for fellowship. A big emphasis was placed on ritual and an average of 75-100 men would attend the meetings. All parts of the ritual ceremonies were memorized by the officers of the lodge and if an officer could not attend a meeting, others could fill in their chair and knew the rituals. Davis recalls that over 200 members were active in the organization.⁶⁷

George Davis, a member of the Rock River Lodge # 612 recalls the lodge as being very active from the 1940s through the 1960s. The lodge's emphasis was on ritualistic degree work and providing aid and assistance to distressed and deceased members of the lodge. Both Orville and George Davis recalled the fellowship of the members and that if you needed help of any kind, a brother from the lodge would be quick to respond to offer assistance.⁶⁸

Rock River Lodge # 612 continues to meet regularly in the temple on the first and fourth Thursday of the month. Since the 1960s the lodge has noted a decline in membership as members have grown older and younger generations are not as interested in joining fraternal organizations.

Higher ritual degree organizations of Freemasonry also met in the Sterling Masonic Temple including the Knights Templars. The Sterling Commandery #57 Knights Templars met on the second Wednesday of every month at 7:30 p.m. The lodge, a part of the York Rite Freemasonry organization offered the eleventh through thirteenth degrees of the York Rite. The Sterling Commandery #57 Knights Templars participated in parades, funerals of deceased members, attended cornerstone laying ceremonies, provided funds for the

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building of the Sterling Masonic Temple, and provided funds for upkeep and repair of the temple, besides having degree enrolling ceremonies. The Knights Templars had colorful uniforms which were worn at public functions including cornerstone laying ceremonies, church services, and funerals of deceased members. The records of the group note:

October 1, 1895. Attended laying of the cornerstone of the State Normal School building at DeKalb with the Sycamore Commandery.

October 28, 1897. Attended funeral of a brother Sir Knight, commandery marched to home of the family where services were held and then escorted the casket to Riverside Cemetery (Sterling) and conducted the Knights Templar ceremony.

March 7, 1899. Voted to purchase new uniforms for the members from the M. C. Lilley & Company of Columbus, Ohio, at the sum of \$26.80 per complete uniform. (M. C. Lilley & Company was a leading provider of lodge furniture, regalia, and uniforms, according to William D. Moore, author of "M. C. Lilley & Company: Manufacturers of Masonic Furniture," in The Scottish Rite Journal, September 1992.)

May 15, 1900. First meeting of commandery was held in the new temple building.

August 17, 1900. Funeral held for Sir Knight, the commandery proceeded in carriages to Milledgeville where the funeral services were conducted according to the ritual of the order.

March 8, 1905. Special conclave was held with a banquet served by the ladies of the Order of the Eastern Star in the banquet room. The ladies were paid \$30 for the banquet. That same meeting bills were paid for travel to the annual state conclave in Peoria including \$50.40 in fares to the Chicago North Western Railroad and \$5 for rooms at the Regis Hotel.

May 2, 1906. \$25 was sent to brothers in San Francisco who were sufferers in the recent earthquake.

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August 2, 1910. Report from officers of commandery who attended the triennial conclave in Chicago. Members were lodged at the Albany Hotel in Chicago. Plans were made to begin fundraising to pay expenses for the next triennial conclave to be held in Denver in 1913.

The 1908 History of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templars of the State of Illinois, Volume II, Part 3 reported the following about the Sterling Commandery #57 Knights Templars. In 1900, the commandery had initiated 7 Sir Knights and had a total membership of 133. In 1907, the commandery had initiated 8 Sir Knights and had a total membership of 174.

The Sterling Commandery #57 Knights Templars continued to remain an active organization of the eleventh through thirteenth degrees of York Rite Masonry during the 1910s through 1940s. Membership however has declined over the years and today, there are very few members of the Commandery left in Sterling.

The Sterling Chapter No. 354 Order of the Eastern Star was the men's and ladies' auxiliary unit of the Sterling Blue Lodge. The Eastern Star held meetings on the first and third Monday of every month at 7:30 p.m. The ladies of the Eastern Star regularly served banquets to both the Rock River Lodge No. 612 and Sterling Commandery No. 57 at the banquet room of the Sterling Masonic Temple. The Eastern Star primary roles were enrollment of members in ritual ceremonies, providing relief for distressed and deceased members, providing funds for the Illinois Masonic Home and Hospital in Sullivan, Illinois, and contributing to other charitable causes.

The Order of the Eastern Star Social Club was formed on October 28, 1912 at the Sterling Masonic Temple and held meetings on the second and fourth Monday afternoon of every month. The Social Club was composed of ladies who were members of the Sterling Chapter No. 354 Order of the Eastern Star. The club later became known as the Sterling Thimble Club. Dues were set at five cents per member attending and proceeds from the dues were used to provide furnishings, linens, curtains, and other items for the Sterling Masonic Temple. The club also met to sew items for the temple. Social activities of the club including talks on travel by members, readings, and musical performances. The club served numerous banquets for the both the Rock River Lodge and Sterling Commandery.

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By September 28, 1913 the club had thirty members. Minutes of the club note these various activities:

December 8, 1915. Report on bazaar that was held at the temple on November 17-18. Receipts from the supper, fancy work, candy, and dance after all bills were paid, were \$112.35. It was voted to purchase table lines for the temple.

April 19, 1916. The Sterling Thimble Club entertained the Dixon & Rock Falls clubs at a luncheon. The tables seated 150 guests and members. Table favors were "yellow marshmellow (sp.) chickens and jellow jonquils." The afternoon was spent at fancy work and a short program.

During World War I the Sterling Thimble Club became an auxiliary of the Red Cross and made thousands of compresses, bandages, and other surgical dressings for the war effort. Minutes during this time note:

September 10, 1917. 132 compresses were made.

September 17, 1917. 38 compresses and 72 sponges were made.

October 1, 1917. 48 compresses and 84 sponges were made. It was voted to collect funds for the war relief from members at five cents per member at every other meeting attended.

January 9, 1918. 5 sweaters, 1 scarf, 23 compresses, 17-3 yard rolls, 1-5 yard roll, and 11 sponges were packed to give to the Red Cross.

April 29, 1918. 32 members and 6 visitors made 1178 compresses.

August 18, 1918. Last meeting of the Red Cross Auxiliary was held.

Following the war the Sterling Thimble Club continued to be an active social organization in the Sterling Masonic Temple for female members. Activities included fundraising events to purchase items for the temple, sewing, card playing, serving banquets to the Masons and

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Commandery, making items for the local hospitals as well as the Masonic Home and Hospital in Sullivan, Illinois, and having musical entertainment, readings, and listening to a Victrola. The club continued to meet regularly until 1984 when it was disbanded.

Other fraternal organizations were located in downtown Sterling during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Sterling seems typical of towns and cities in the Midwest in that the community had a number of active fraternal organizations. These organizations began to be formed soon after Sterling's founding and numerous groups erected their own lodge halls or rented quarters in commercial buildings in the downtown. Most of these fraternal organizations were very active during the golden age of fraternities from the late 1800s through the 1920s but began to lose many members during the Great Depression. A number of these organizations have been closed for a number of years or have moved to newer headquarters on the outskirts of Sterling.

Other fraternal organizations include the Sterling Lodge No. 174, International Order of Odd Fellows. The Sterling Lodge No. 174 was founded on May 31, 1855 with six charter members. On February 26, 1896 the Odd Fellows dedicated a new three-story, brick Queen Anne and Romanesque Revival styled building at 11 East Fourth Street. The building has a slate hipped roof with projecting gables and hipped dormers. Large arched windows and decorative brick corbelling at the cornice line are among the building's Romanesque Revival features. On the third story of the front facade is an elaborate arched stained glass window. Low relief moldings with the initials I. O. O. F. for the International Order of Odd Fellows are cast on the projecting front gable below an elaborate low relief sunburst pattern. The first story has a store front to the east with an entry to the west to the Odd Fellows' quarters on the second and third stories. The store room is currently used for storage and the quarters of the Odd Fellows on the second and third stories have been converted into apartments which are currently vacant. It is unknown if the lodge room on the third story is still intact. The Sterling Lodge No. 174 owned the Odd Fellows Cemetery at 200 Nineteenth Avenue, on the bluffs of the Rock River. The cemetery was first designed for members of the order only, but its beauty attracted the attention of others not belonging to the order, and it was decided by the Odd Fellows Lodge to sell lots to all. In February 1865 the Sterling Cemetery Association, made up of many members of the Odd Fellows lodge, was organized and bought 40 acres adjoining the Odd Fellows Cemetery for the new Riverside Cemetery. In connection with the Odd Fellows Lodge was the Abraham Encampment, Number 49, instituted on March 21, 1860, and the Rebekah Lodge No. 26,

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instituted on July 28, 1870. In 1908 the Sterling Lodge No. 174 had a membership of 148. Also in 1908, the Rebekahs, a ladies' auxiliary of the Odd Fellows, had a membership of 75.

To the east of the Odd Fellows Hall is the Mystic Workers of the World Hall at 13 East Fourth Street. The Sterling Lodge, No. 2, was organized on December 11, 1895 with 28 members. By 1908 the membership had grown to 590. The Mystic Workers of the World was a fraternal benefit organization which began in Fulton, Illinois in Whiteside County in 1892 as a splinter group from the Modern Woodmen of America which was headquartered in Rock Island, Illinois. The organization admitted both men and women and by 1919 had 95,000 members nationwide. In 1930 the organization had become known as the Fidelity Life Association, a fraternal insurance organization, and closed its remaining fraternal lodge buildings. According to William Davis, author of the 1908 History of Whiteside County, the organization was noted as the largest order in the county with lodges located in Sterling, Rock Falls, Prophetstown, Lyndon, Erie, Tampico, Fulton, and Morrison. The Mystic Workers of the World Hall at 13 East Fourth Street was located in the former Grand Army of the Republic Hall built in the late 1800s. The two story brick building has a store room on the first story and lodge quarters on the second story. In the 1950s the front facade was completely covered with ceramic and steel panels. It is unknown whether the lodge room still exists on the second story.

The Knights of Pythias was founded on February 19, 1864 by several federal government clerks in Washington, D. C. as a fraternal order lodge. The order had five degrees. Within a decade membership in the order exceeded 250,000 and by 1900 the membership was over 500,000. By 1920 the order had almost 1,000,000 members. Corinthian Lodge, No. 63 was organized on November 23, 1875 in Sterling, Illinois with 21 charter members. By 1908 the order had a membership of 100. The Rosewood Temple No. 12 of the Pythian Sisters, a ladies' auxiliary organization of the Knights of Pythias had 60 members in 1908. The Knights of Pythias Hall was located at 102 West Third Street, north of the Sterling Masonic Temple in the Lawrence Block. The building has been demolished. Later, the group met at 306 First Avenue, which has also been demolished.

The Knights of the Globe was organized in 1889 in Freeport, Illinois as a fraternal benefit order that had strong patriotic sentiments. The organization admitted both men and women. The order's members resided mostly in Illinois and Wisconsin. The fraternity's

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headquarters was located in Chicago. By the 1908 the order had over 100 lodges with 10,000 members. The Sterling Garrison No. 83, Knights of the Globe was organized on October 11, 1894. The Clara Barton Garrison, No. 34, Eminent Ladies, a ladies' auxiliary of the Knights of the Globe was instituted on April 20, 1897 with 29 charter members. Both groups met in the Academy of Music Building at 314-324 Locust Street. The three story brick Italianate styled building was built as an opera house and music academy. The building included meeting space for several social and fraternal groups. As a result of the failure of the insurance feature of the organization, the Knights of the Globe and Eminent Ladies passed out of existence.

The Modern Woodmen of America was organized at Lyons, Iowa on January 5, 1883 with 21 charter members. The fraternal benefit organization provided life insurance and had headquarters in Fulton, Illinois for fourteen years, but after a bitter struggle the offices were moved to Rock Island, Illinois. By 1908, the organization had a membership of 900,000. The Sterling Camp, No. 12, Modern Woodmen of America was organized on July 1, 1883 with 13 charter members. In 1908, the Sterling Camp, No. 12 had 390 members. The ladies' auxiliary of the Modern Woodmen, the Royal Neighbors of America formed the Good Luck Camp, No. 30, Royal Neighbors of America in 1900. In 1908 the group had a membership of 120 members. The Modern Woodmen and Royal Neighbors met on the second floor of the Farwell Building at 310-312 Locust Street adjacent to the Academy of Music Building. The building has been demolished.

The Fraternal Order of Eagles, a men's fraternal organization, was founded in Seattle, Washington in 1898 by a small group of theater owners who met to form an organization for fun, fellowship, and fraternal service. The Sterling Aerie No. 831, Fraternal Order of Eagles met in Mannerchor Hall at 208 First Avenue. The building has been demolished.

The Loyal Order of Moose, a men's fraternal organization, was founded in Louisville, Kentucky in 1888 by John Henry Wilson. The organization provides support for Mooseheart, an orphanage in Illinois, and Moosehaven, a senior citizens' complex in Florida. The Sterling Moose Lodge met at 102 West Third Street, the former quarter of the Knights of Pythias during the 1920s and 1930s. The lodge later built their own modern quarters on East Nineteenth Street.

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The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, a men's fraternal organization, began as a fellowship of fun-loving, merrymaking singers and actors, who first met in an alehouse in New York City on November 15, 1867. The Sterling Elks Lodge was chartered in December 1910. In June 1914 construction began on a new three-story brick building for the lodge at 319 Avenue B. The building has been demolished.

The Mystic Workers of the World rented their hall out to various fraternal groups and organizations including the Sterling Tribune No. 118, Fraternal Tribunes. The Fraternal Tribunes was a fraternal beneficiary order founded in 1897 in Rock Island, Illinois, the society had 9,084 members in 1908. Its insurance certificates were backed by a loan and indemnity firm. This was touted as a unique feature of the order. The order only existed for a couple of decades. The home office was in Rock Island, Illinois.

The first American fraternal insurance society, the Ancient Order of United Workmen, was founded in 1868 in Meadville, Pennsylvania, by John J. Upchurch, a Freemason. The organization had four initiatory degrees modeled on Masonry and Odd Fellowship degrees. By 1897 the society had 315,000 members. The Union Lodge, No. 3, Ancient Order of United Workmen, founded in Sterling on February 13, 1875, met in the Mystic Workers of the World Hall.

The Brotherhood of Yeoman, a fraternal organization; Stars of Equity, a fraternal organization; and the Good Fellowship Lodge No. 1739, Modern Brotherhood of America also met in the Mystic Workers of the World Hall.

The Grand Army of the Republic, a veteran's organization even offered three separate initiation rituals. The Will Robinson Post No. 274, Grand Army of the Republic was organized on June 14, 1883 for Civil War veterans. The group had at its highest number belonging at any one time a membership of 180. By 1908 the group's membership was down to 98. The Will C. Robinson Woman's Relief Corps, No. 45, a ladies' auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic was organized on May 1, 1886. Both groups first met in the Grand Army of the Republic Hall at the corner of Fourth and Locust (demolished). Later, the groups met at the Sterling City Hall.

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Oral Interviews

Oral Interview with Evelyn Conn, Rock Falls, Illinois, various dates in 1996.

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Oral Interview with Orville Davis, Sterling, Illinois, July 2, 1996.

Oral Interview with Myrtle West, Sterling, Illinois, various dates in 1996.

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Sterling Masonic Temple

Verbal Boundary Description

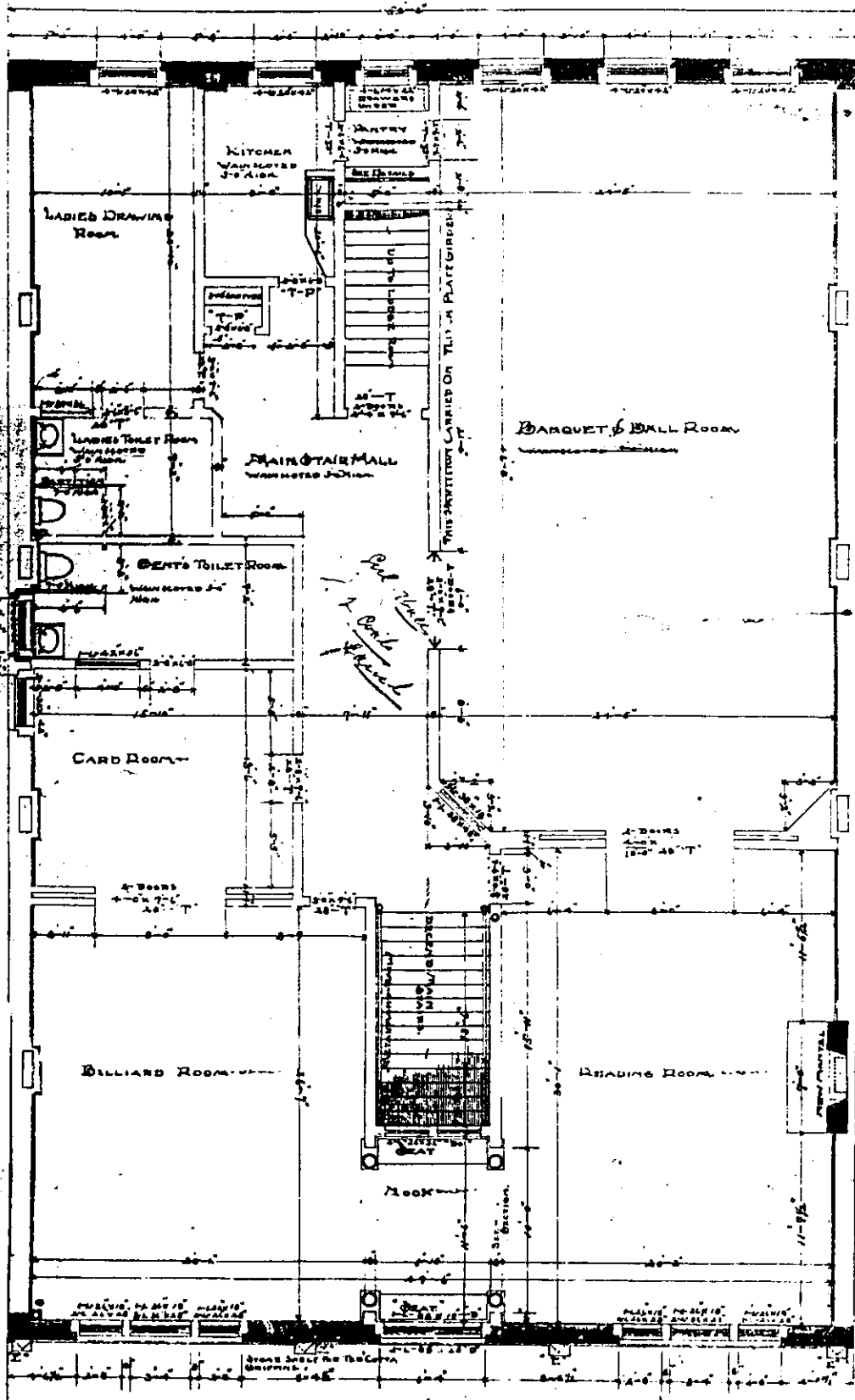
The property is described as follows: Lots 6 & 7 in Block 2 of Wallace's Addition to the City of Sterling, Whiteside County, Illinois.

Boundary Justification

The property includes the lots and building historically associated with the Sterling Masonic Temple and that maintains historic integrity.



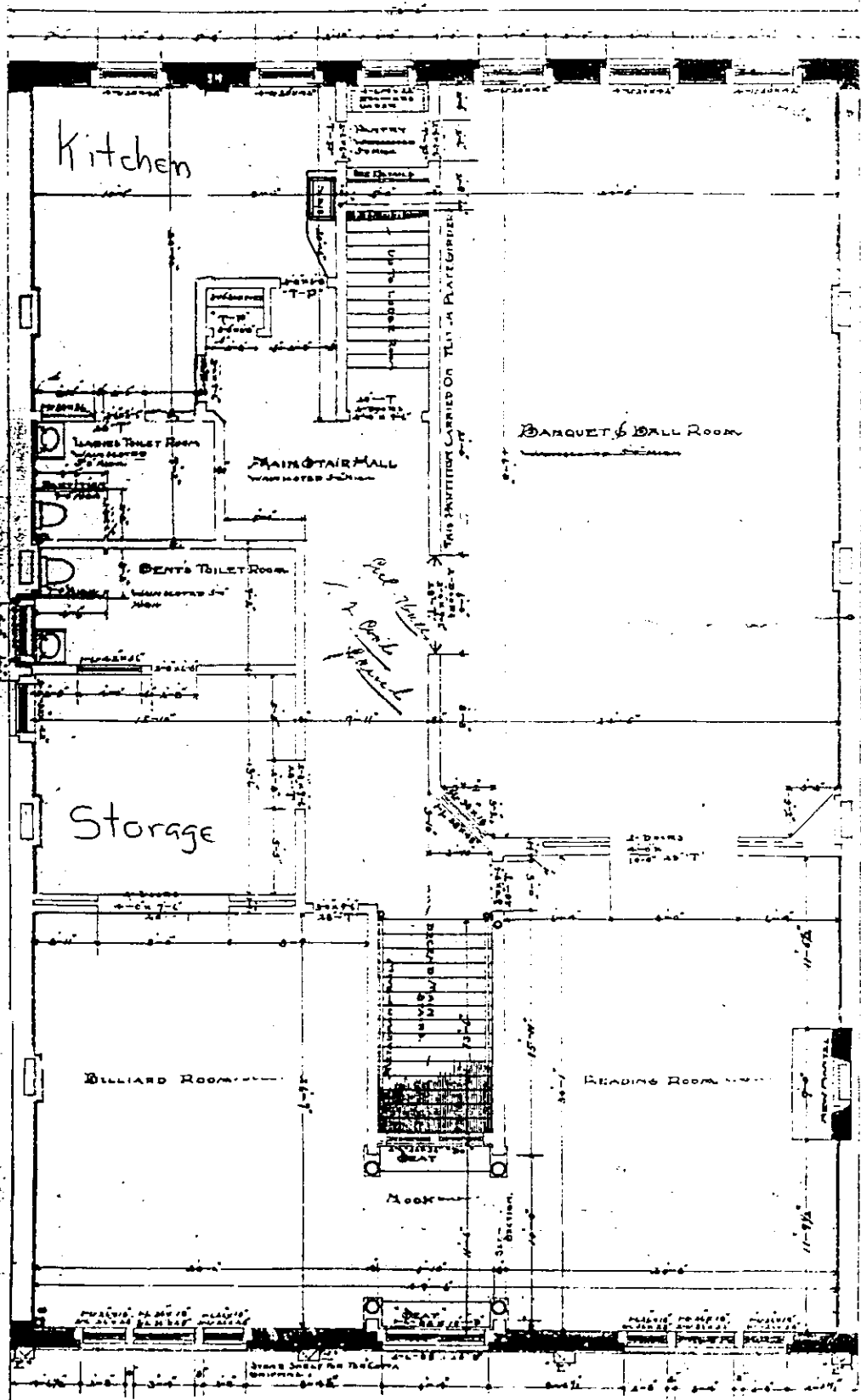
Sterling Masonic Temple



SECOND FLOOR PLAN OF MASONIC TEMPLE AT OTTERLING ILL.
 5-W ASHBY ARCHT. RIVERSIDE ILL.

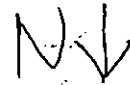
Original Layout





SECOND FLOOR PLAN OF MASONIC TEMPLE AT TETERING LLA
 6 WASH. ARCHT. RIVERSIDE LLA

Current Second Floor



MMV 15 1996

ILLINOIS, ADAMS COUNTY, Fall Creek Stone Arch Bridge, 1.2 mi. NE of Fall Cr.--Payson Rd., across Fall Cr.; Payson vicinity, 96001282, LISTED, 11/07/96
ILLINOIS, FULTON COUNTY, Chipman, Edith, House, 201 W. 3rd St., Vermont, 96001290, LISTED, 11/07/96 (Vermont, Illinois MPS)
ILLINOIS, FULTON COUNTY, Durell, William Franklin and Rebecca, House, 408 W. 5th St., Vermont, 96001292, LISTED, 11/07/96 (Vermont, Illinois MPS)
ILLINOIS, FULTON COUNTY, Hamer, Edward, House, 200 W. 2nd St., Vermont, 96001293, LISTED, 11/07/96 (Vermont, Illinois MPS)
ILLINOIS, FULTON COUNTY, Hamer, Patterson, House, 405 W. 5th St., Vermont, 96001287, LISTED, 11/07/96 (Vermont, Illinois MPS)
ILLINOIS, FULTON COUNTY, Hoopes, William, House, 204 N. Liberty St., Vermont, 96001285, LISTED, 11/07/96 (Vermont, Illinois MPS)
ILLINOIS, FULTON COUNTY, Hunter, Lucinda, House, 101 E. 8th St., Vermont, 96001286, LISTED, 11/07/96 (Vermont, Illinois MPS)
ILLINOIS, FULTON COUNTY, McCormick, Charles Emmor, House, 712 W. 3rd St., Vermont, 96001284, LISTED, 11/07/96 (Vermont, Illinois MPS)
ILLINOIS, FULTON COUNTY, Mershon, Joab, House, 507 W. 5th St., Vermont, 96001294, LISTED, 11/07/96 (Vermont, Illinois MPS)
ILLINOIS, FULTON COUNTY, O'Connell, Daniel, House, 115 N. Union St., Vermont, 96001288, LISTED, 11/07/96 (Vermont, Illinois MPS)
ILLINOIS, FULTON COUNTY, Page, Henry H., House, 221 N. Union St., Vermont, 96001289, LISTED, 11/07/96 (Vermont, Illinois MPS)
ILLINOIS, FULTON COUNTY, Ross, Harvey Lee, House, 602 S. Main St., Vermont, 96001295, LISTED, 11/07/96 (Vermont, Illinois MPS)
ILLINOIS, FULTON COUNTY, Snowden, Elsworth, House, 504 W. 3rd St., Vermont, 96001283, LISTED, 11/07/96 (Vermont, Illinois MPS)
ILLINOIS, FULTON COUNTY, Stapleford--Hover--Whitney House, 401 N. Main St., Vermont, 96001291, LISTED, 11/07/96 (Vermont, Illinois MPS)
ILLINOIS, WHITESIDE COUNTY, Sterling Masonic Temple, 111--113 W. 3rd St., Sterling, 96001279, LISTED, 11/07/96
MISSISSIPPI, ALCORN COUNTY, Rienzi Commercial Historic District, Jct. of Front and Main Sts., Rienzi, 96001312, LISTED, 11/07/96
MISSISSIPPI, HINDS COUNTY, Holly Grove Plantation House, 1056 Old Bridgeport Rd., Bolton vicinity, 96001313, LISTED, 11/07/96
NORTH DAKOTA, WALSH COUNTY, Grafton State School, 700 6th St., W., Grafton, 96001191, LISTED, 11/06/96
PENNSYLVANIA, BERKS COUNTY, Livingood House--Stryker Hospital, 417--419 Walnut St., Reading, 96001195, LISTED, 11/07/96
PENNSYLVANIA, CHESTER COUNTY, Fairville Historic District, Kennett Pike between Fairville Rd. and Hickory Hill Rd., Pennsbury Township, Kennett Square vicinity, 96001200, LISTED, 11/07/96
PENNSYLVANIA, ERIE COUNTY, Villa Maria Academy, 819 W. 8th St., Erie, 96001193, LISTED, 11/08/96
PENNSYLVANIA, LANCASTER COUNTY, Rever, Peter and Catherine, Farmhouse, Trout Run Rd., W of jct. with PA 272, Ephrata, 96001314, LISTED, 11/07/96 (Historic Farming Resources of Lancaster County MPS)
PENNSYLVANIA, MERCER COUNTY, August, Wendell, Forge, 620 Madison St., Grove City, 96001192, LISTED, 11/07/96
RHODE ISLAND, WASHINGTON COUNTY, Westerly Armory, Railroad Ave., W of downtown Westerly, Westerly, 96001322, LISTED, 11/07/96
SOUTH CAROLINA, CHARLESTON COUNTY, Coming Street Cemetery, 189 Coming St., Charleston, 96001223, LISTED, 11/05/96
SOUTH DAKOTA, CAMPBELL COUNTY, Pollock Depot, Ave. A, SW of SD 10, Pollock, 96001229, LISTED, 11/08/96
TENNESSEE, CARTER COUNTY, Butler House, 206 Main St., Hampton, 96001315, LISTED, 11/07/96
TENNESSEE, SEQUATCHIE COUNTY, Douglas Coal and Coke Company Clubhouse, 512 Mountain View, Dunlap, 96001317, LISTED, 11/07/96
TEXAS, POTTER COUNTY, Northwest Texas Hospital School of Nursing, 2209 W. 6th Ave., Amarillo, 96001234, LISTED, 11/07/96
UTAH, SUMMIT COUNTY, Park City High School Mechanical Arts Building, 1167 Woodside, Park City, 96001324, LISTED, 11/07/96 (Public Works Buildings TR)
UTAH, WASHINGTON COUNTY, Parunuweap Canyon Archeological District, Address Restricted, Springdale vicinity, 96001235, LISTED, 11/07/96
VERMONT, BENNINGTON COUNTY, Wait Block, Near jct. of Main and Bonnet Sts., Manchester Center Village, Manchester, 96001327, LISTED, 11/07/96
VERMONT, FRANKLIN COUNTY, Fairfield Street School, 78 Fairfield St., St. Albans, 96001326, LISTED, 11/07/96 (Educational Resources of Vermont MPS)
VERMONT, WINDHAM COUNTY, Grout, Lewis, House, 382 Western Ave., Brattleboro, 96001328, LISTED, 11/07/96
VIRGINIA, CHARLOTTESVILLE INDEPENDENT CITY, Lewis Farm, 1201 Jefferson St., Charlottesville (Independent City), 82001807, ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVED, 11/07/96 (Charlottesville MRA)
VIRGINIA, CLARKE COUNTY, Long Marsh Run Rural Historic District, Roughly bounded by WV state line, VA 608, VA 612, VA 7, and VA 653, Berryville vicinity, 96001173, LISTED, 11/04/96
VIRGINIA, FRANKLIN COUNTY, Waverly, N side of VA 122, 2 mi. NE of jct. with VA 116, Burnt Chimney vicinity, 96001329, LISTED, 11/07/96