

Masonic Temple

Masonry in Quincy began in 1834 when a petition from a group went forward for a lodge here. The lodge status was granted in 1835, and from that time, Masonry has flourished here, attracting men of all walks of life into the brotherhood which attracted such men as Stephen A. Douglas, James Mathany (best man at Lincoln's wedding), James Shield (who challenged Lincoln to a duel), and Isaac Deiler (Lincoln's druggist).

From the opening of Masonry here until 1911, the Masons had not owned a home of their own but had leased quarters, each individual lodge separately, for short periods in buildings throughout the downtown area. The earliest of their locations was the Kendall Building on 6th & Maine, later the Tillson Building at 4th & Maine, later the Pinkham Building between 3rd and 4th on Maine.

There had been attempts to organize all the masonic bodies in Quincy to erect a temple for use by all the groups, and in 1906 such an organization was formed. By 1910, funds had been accumulated and architects John Batschy and George Behrensmeyer retained to construct a magnificent 4½ story home for Quincy Masonry. The building dedication was held October 29, 1911 with hundreds of Masons from outside Quincy joining the 700 Quincy Masons in the celebration.

Only the finest of construction materials were used in the construction and appointing of the Temple, and that fact is obvious as one nears the building and again upon first entering the building were the foyer is framed by stained birch Ionic columns and pilasters. Even the furniture, in the parlor and throughout the building, gifts for the most part, are the very richest available at that time of the bequests. On the second floor is an elaborate pillared pool room and card room, with fine ornate tables of the period when the building was constructed, some coming from earlier pool rooms in Quincy. Decor throughout the building is transitional with a flavor of the emerging prairie period. In some of the ceremonial rooms stained glass inserts highlight the grandeur that was built into the rooms for their secret religious and fraternal functions. Classic forms intermingle with transitional and original interpretation of Egyptian proportioning. Many of the light fixtures on the upper floors are original. Most of the ornamental woodwork on the upper floors is birch, but the balcony facade in the preceptory on the fourth floor (and the panneling beside the organ pipes) is solid cherry.

The obvious respect with which the building is viewed by the Masonic bodies who use and maintain it, give promise for this outstanding Quincy building to be preserved and pointed to with pride by the community for many generations to come. The Masonic bodies are to be congratulated for their example.

Quincy Preserves!

An independent community organization working to preserve Quincy's architectural and historic heritage