

Za-Ga-Zig Temple

Za-Ga-Zig Temple in Des Moines was the eighty-second Shrine Temple created in the United States, being established with Kalurah of Binghamton, New York, and Karnak of Montreal, on May 23, 1900. Za-Ga-Zig is named for a city in northern Egypt in the delta of the Nile. It is located in the capital and largest city in Iowa, and it has in its jurisdiction twenty-eight Iowa counties. It has the largest membership of the four Shrine Temples in Iowa and its colorful patrols and uniformed bodies stage parades of unparalleled grandeur.

As early as December 10, 1890, the Nobility of Des Moines, who at that time were members of El Kahir in Cedar Rapids, petitioned El Kahir Temple to urge the Imperial Potentate to issue a dispensation to establish a Temple in Des Moines. The petition was tabled, and when reconsidered, after considerable discussion, the motion was defeated by a vote of 38 for and 83 against, the creation of a Shrine Temple at Des Moines. At this same meeting the petition to establish a Temple at Sioux City was also denied by El Kahir.

Undaunted by this rebuff, the Nobles of Des Moines bided their time, awaiting a more favor-

able opportunity. Membership in Des Moines and nearby counties continued to grow. The opportunity arose in 1898 when El Kahir held a Ceremonial in Carroll. Noble Frank O. Evans of Des Moines attended the Carroll Ceremonial with a small band of candidates. The enthusiasm of Evans was so contagious that Illustrious Potentate Ed Alderman and Recorder John Geiger of El Kahir promised him and his small class of candidates that if they would "organize and promote a class at Des Moines, they would see that a petition for a Temple at Des Moines received favorable action from the El Kahir Nobles."

Frank Evans was just the kind of man to confront with such a challenge. Born in Mendota, Illinois, on October 4, 1867, Evans was the son of English-born parents who had migrated to America and reared a family of six. Frank was educated in the Mendota public schools and "Columbus [Ohio] University." He studied telegraphy at Grand Island, Nebraska, and was first employed as a telegraph operator by the Burlington Railroad. After two years he forsook railroading for a position with Story & Clark Piano Company of New York, rising rapidly to the position of a director and stockholder. Meanwhile, he established and became president of the F. O. Evans Piano Company, a large piano manufacturer in Des Moines employing fifty highly skilled men and a large office force. Instruments manufactured in

the Des Moines factory were shipped all over the United States.

A Knight Templar and a Scottish Rite Mason, Frank O. Evans served as Illustrious Potentate of El Kahir during the hectic fight for the Des Moines Temple. He was elected the second Illustrious Potentate of Za-Ga-Zig, continuing in that exalted post from 1901 to 1909, the longest term ever held in that body. A member of many Des Moines civic, social and fraternal groups, Evans was described as "one of the most enterprising business men" in the capital city, and just the type of man to establish and build a strong Shrine Temple in Des Moines.

Noble Evans and his fellow Shriners were not slow in facing the challenge made in good faith by El Kahir's officers. Meetings were called, committees named, assessments voted, and the date February 15, 1899, chosen for a rousing Des Moines Ceremonial by El Kahir.

On February 15, 1899, the *Des Moines Register* announced that wearers of the "Red Fez, Crescent, Scimitar" would "Parade, Initiate, Banquet, and Disport Themselves Joyfully in the Capital City Today." Four cartoons were used and a partial list of candidates printed. The Toastmaster's welcome was given by Noble Sidney A. Foster, Des Moines. Other toasts, with their responders, were:

"On the Sands with General Shafter, or a

Shriner Done up Brown in Cuba," response by Prospective Noble Lafayette Young, of Des Moines.

"An International Position, or Hanging onto Manila," response, Prospective Noble Ed H. Addison, of Maxwell.

The Ceremonial received the following headlines on February 16:

SHRINERS OWNED DES MOINES

Took Possession of it early Wednesday and Hung
on till Daylight Today

Had a Parade That was Immense and Made 133 Candidates
Walk the Hot Sands

Began a Banquet at the Savery at 1 O'clock This Morning
and Made Speeches Till Sunrise.

Headquarters of the Shriners was at the Kirkwood Hotel which by noon resembled a Moham-
medan Temple. Streets were decorated and the
leading business houses carried lavish greetings.
The colorful parade, in which over 700 Shriners
marched, began at Turner Hall and covered the
principal downtown streets before stopping at the
Kirkwood to receive the Keys of the City from
Mayor John MacVicar. The Mayor gave an un-
usually appropriate welcome, to which Illustrious
Potentate Edwin I. Alderman responded in part
as follows:

I accept your tender of the freedom of the city in behalf
of my companions, and the many eminent members of the
Mystic Shrine present. But there is one thing which you

have omitted to mention as a characteristic of a good man. Besides good deeds, good words, and good hearts, there is one other thing, a good appetite. We agree to use the keys to open all the locks in the city which they will open. From this time on till sunrise you must expect the greatest Arab invasion since the Ottomans entered the Alhambra. If your police are allowed to go abroad, handcuff them.

In addition to a complete list of the 133 candidates, said to be "the largest class ever put through the initiatory service west of the Mississippi River," the *Register* sketched the beginnings of the Shrine in Iowa. Kaaba was recognized as the oldest Shrine, with 1,200 members "comprising many of the leading men in Iowa, in politics, business and the professions. It has one of the finest club rooms in the state, and its resident members always extend an Oriental welcome to any wandering Arab who may stray within the limits of the oasis." The spectacular growth of El Kahir, to which Des Moines Nobles belonged, also won high acclaim because it ranked fifth in the Nation in membership.

Spurred on by their successful Ceremonial in Des Moines and the promise of El Kahir's Illustrious Potentate and Recorder to help them attain a Shrine Temple, a delegation of Des Moines and western Iowa Nobles journeyed to Cedar Rapids by special train to attend the annual business meeting of El Kahir on December 13, 1899. Meanwhile, opposition to another Iowa Temple

had developed in El Kahir. When the meeting convened and the vote was taken, the Des Moines contingent lost by a small margin. El Kahir Nobles opposed to a new Temple in Iowa left the meeting and returned to their work — their mission accomplished. But the Nobility from the Capital City remained for the annual election. To the chagrin of local members of El Kahir, who were now in the minority, those present chose Noble Frank O. Evans of Des Moines as Illustrious Potentate of El Kahir and elected as representatives to the Imperial Council of 1900 in Washington, D. C., those Nobles who presumably would be favorable to establishing a Temple in Des Moines.

The petition for a Shrine Temple in Des Moines was strengthened by the addition of a special delegation composed of Nobles George McCartney, Charles H. Austin, Conrad Youngerman, John J. Price, S. N. Maine, George Christian, and John Holsman who were to present it at the National Conclave. On May 23, 1900, the Committee on Charters and Dispensations reported favorably. The Des Moines Nobles had so successfully campaigned for a Temple that not a single vote was in the negative, although El Kahir and Kaaba, the two Iowa Temples, did not vote. The feeling was so intense that no dispensation was required, and a charter to Za-Ga-Zig was promptly granted. Noble George McCartney was chosen as the first Potentate of the third Shrine Temple in Iowa.

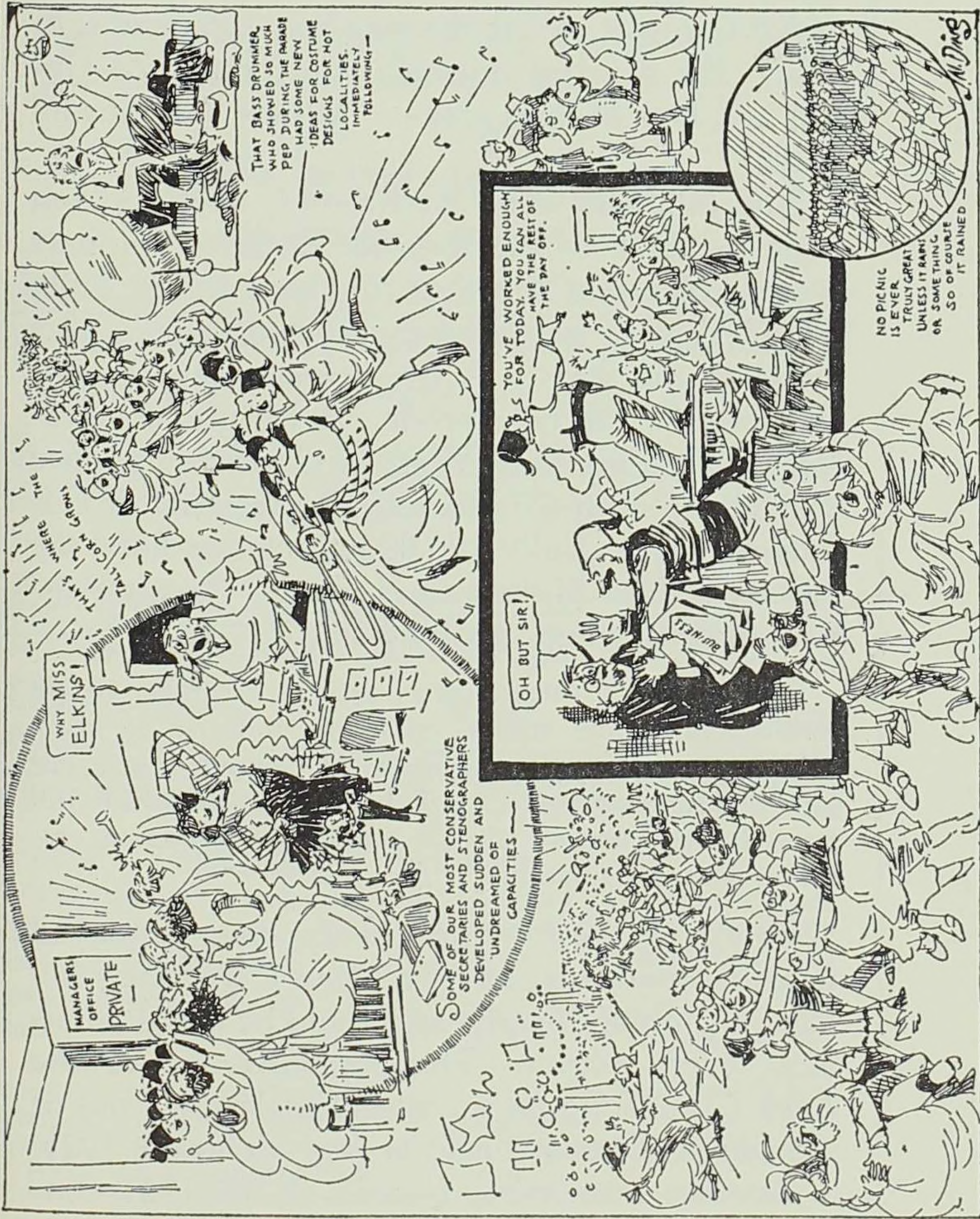
The first Ceremonial and formal installation of Za-Ga-Zig Temple took place in Des Moines on September 4, 1900. Imperial Potentate Lou B. Winsor of Michigan volunteered to be the first official guest. Invitations went out to Potentates of all Midwestern Temples. Uniformed Units from Omaha, Minneapolis, St. Paul, St. Joseph, Kansas City, and Chicago lent color and grandeur to the pageantry which included camels and gorgeously ornate robes far eclipsing anything ever seen in Des Moines, not excepting the exciting Ceremonial of 1899. Fully 2,000 Nobles were present. Again a record was broken when a class of 136 was initiated from Central Iowa. This made a total of 600 Nobles in Za-Ga-Zig, which deserved to be called a "remarkably strong Shrine Temple" at the close of its first year.

But Za-Ga-Zig should be remembered for two outstanding Shrine events. On June 14, 15, 16, 1921, the Imperial Council of the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine met in Des Moines, the first and only time the National Conclave was held in Iowa. The *Des Moines Register* of June 13 had a front page headline — "Nobles Greet Garretson" — as Imperial Potentate Ellis L. Garretson steamed into the "verdant oasis" of Des Moines to preside over the 47th Annual Session. He was accompanied by "wierdly oriental music" as he was driven to the Fort Des Moines Hotel. Meanwhile, feverish preparations

DING GIVES A FEW HOSPITALITY HINTS FOR SHRINE WEEK



Shrine Circus Sidelights the Camera Men Overlooked



"The Shrine With Their Bands Did Play With Such Skill, That No One Who Heard Them Could Ever Stand Still"—Modified Mother Goose.—By J. N. Darling
"Ding" The Register's Famous Staff Cartoonist.

were being made to care for between 80,000 and 100,000 guests. With the weather warm and sunny, the greatest dilemma confronting Za-Ga-Zig and Des Moines was — "Where will they all bathe?"

The following day, on June 14, another front page headline in the *Register* declared Shriners were "dolling up" for their first big parade. Fully 35,000 Nobles were already in town with "armies more on the way." A five-column map showed the route of the big parade. A feature story related that President Warren G. Harding once played cornet in the Aladdin Shrine Band of Columbus, Ohio. Fully 100,000 spectators lined the streets of Des Moines to cheer the "Great Pageant of Shrinedom" on June 14.

Like a flashing oriental army seen in a mirage, 10,000 well-drilled Shrine nobles, ornate in uniforms of every color of the spectrum and every cut envisioned in a tailor's nightmare, created a matchless spectacle which will never be forgotten by 100,000 people who witnessed yesterday morning's parade.

Bands from all sections of the country played favorite selections, but the *Iowa Corn Song* became the prime favorite and could be heard on almost every corner. The popularization of the *Iowa Corn Song* on a national scale grew out of the Shrine Conclave held in Des Moines in 1921.

Another memorable feature of the 1921 conclave was the induction of three new Shrines —

Shrine Corn Song Puts Iowa on Map

IOWA CORN SONG



We're from I - o - way I - o - way,



Oh it's Simply Grand In that Fine Old



Land, We're from I - o - way I - o -



Way That's Where the Tall Corn Grows -

While the Shriners are in Des Moines, they have one song that has become a "national Shrine anthem" to them.

Band after band marched through the streets Tuesday morning, playing the famous Iowa corn song as they went.

When the parade was held

up temporarily, and the bands stopped marching, they would strike up the Iowa corn song.

Des Moines people know it, the Shriners know it, and Iowa people visiting here now know it.

It is the song that is putting Iowa on the map.

"That's where the tall corn grows."

Maskat of Wichita Falls, Texas, Al Kaly of Pueblo, Colorado, and Khiva of Amarillo, Texas, on June 16, 1921. The previous day, June 15, dispensations were granted to Al Bedoo of Billings, Montana, Anah of Bangor, Maine, Mahi of Miami, Florida, and Tigris of Syracuse, New York. On this same day the Imperial Council rejected twelve petitions for dispensations, including those of Fort Dodge and Ottumwa in Iowa.

Most memorable of all, however, is the fact that it was at Des Moines in 1921 that the Shriners, after much discussion as to aims and procedures, established "The Shriners' Hospitals for Crippled Children." The clinching argument in this now nationally famous humanitarian project came in a telegram from Dr. William Mayo, himself a Shriner. It read — "I approve of the principle of the building of Shrine hospitals for the care of crippled children. Several should be built. . . . The plan is laudable and worthy of the great body of Shriners."

Most Iowans will be surprised to learn that the Imperial Council of the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine for North America is an Iowa Corporation — incorporated on December 15, 1936. Article II declares:

The principal office and place of business of this Corporation shall be in the City of Des Moines, in the County of Polk and State of Iowa and, particularly, the office of the Recorder of Za-Ga-Zig Temple, Ancient Arabic Order

of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine for North America in the City of Des Moines, County of Polk, State of Iowa.

Za-Ga-Zig proudly points to Earl C. Mills, the second Imperial Potentate elected from Iowa, who served in that capacity from July 27, 1932, to July 13, 1933. Mills was Illustrious Potentate of Za-Ga-Zig from 1911 to 1913, and his name heads the list of Shriners on the Articles of Incorporation.

In the sixty-three years of its existence, Za-Ga-Zig has initiated and affiliated 17,588 Nobles and can count on its membership rolls for 1963 fully 6,875 Shriners. It has jurisdiction over the following twenty-eight counties:

Adair	Clarke	Jasper	Polk
Adams	Dallas	Madison	Ringgold
Audubon	Decatur	Marion	Story
Boone	Fremont	Marshall	Taylor
Calhoun	Greene	Mills	Union
Carroll	Guthrie	Montgomery	Warren
Cass	Hamilton	Page	Webster
Lucas — Concurrent			

A key to the success of any Temple is its Shrine Clubs. The eight Za-Ga-Zig Shrine Clubs, their location and date of founding, appear below.

- Fort Dodge Shrine Club (1956)
- Raccoon Valley Shrine Club, Perry (1957)
- Boone County Shrine Club (1957)
- Nishna Valley Shrine Club, Atlantic (1960)
- Southwest Iowa Shrine Club, Shenandoah (1960)
- Story County Shrine Club, Nevada (1960)

Lucas County Shrine Club, Chariton (1961)
Marshalltown Shrine Club (1962)

The Uniformed Units of Za-Ga-Zig are made up of Nobles from Des Moines and its immediate environs, and from the eight Shrine Clubs. The variety of activity open to Nobles of Za-Ga-Zig Temple is almost endless. The names and dates the various Units were formed were provided by Recorder Roy C. Carlson:

Arab Patrol (1900)	Mounties (1953)
Band (1914)	Ritualistic Cast (1954)
Chanters (1920)	Saxophone Sextette (1955)
Bedouins (1928)	Nomads (1957)
Oriental Band (1930)	Motor Clowns (1957)
Class Conductors (1949)	Troubadours (1958)
Provost Guard (1949)	Legion of Honor (1962)
Greeters (1950)	Noble Chords (1962)
Tux Brigade (1952)	

A noted Iowan, Sidney Foster, once said, "In all that is good, Iowa affords the best." Noble Foster might have quite appropriately said of his own Temple: "In all that is good, Za-Ga-Zig affords the best."

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN