

El Kahir Temple

Although Kaaba is the oldest Shrine Temple in Iowa, El Kahir in Cedar Rapids has the distinction of being the fastest-growing Temple in the United States prior to 1900. On February 16, 1899, on the occasion of the Shrine Ceremonial in the Capital City, the *Des Moines Register* commented as follows on El Kahir's spectacular growth.

Of the sixty [78] temples in America no one body has shown such a rapid increase in membership. Of those in Iowa eligible to receive the order, numbering about 4,000, more than 1,500 hold certificates of membership in El Kahir, which stands fifth in point of numbers in the United States — being exceeded only by those much older bodies in larger centers, *viz.*: Aleppo of Boston, Mecca of New York, Lu Lu of Philadelphia, and Medinah of Chicago.

From its beginning in 1886, El Kahir Temple enjoyed truly phenomenal membership growth. It was on February 16, 1886, that James Morton received the Shrine rituals from Imperial Potentate Walter M. Fleming. Hastening back to Cedar Rapids, Morton initiated Cyrus Waldgrave Eaton as the Grand Potentate elect of El Kahir Temple. The following day Eaton and Morton conferred the Order of Nobility on James L. Bever, George

W. Bever, Upton C. Blake, Edward L. Foster, and Calvin G. Greene. The following officers were then elected:

Cyrus W. Eaton	32°	Grand Potentate
George W. Bever	32°	Illustrious Chief Rabban
Calvin G. Greene	32°	Assistant Rabban
James Morton	32°	High Priest & Prophet
Upton C. Blake	32°	Oriental Guide
James L. Bever	32°	Treasurer
Edward I. Foster	32°	Recorder

At this same meeting Theodore S. Parvin and John B. Bever were elected to membership and the initiation fee was set at \$25. Theodore S. Parvin might well be called the "Father of Masonry in Iowa"; the Masonic Library at Cedar Rapids stands as a monument to his vision.

The founders of El Kahir were outstanding Cedar Rapids citizens — men whose enterprise and integrity were matched by their benevolence and desire to participate in all worthy causes. Cyrus W. Eaton was born in Vermont in 1837 and settled in Cedar Rapids in 1869. He was a member of the firm of Jones & Eaton, wholesale and retail hardware merchants, and was active in all civic affairs. The two Bevers (with their newly-elected brother, John B.) were officers in the City National Bank and active in both civic and fraternal matters. Calvin G. Greene was a prominent Cedar Rapids real estate man, whose illustrious father had served with distinction on the Su-

preme Court of Iowa. James Morton, who was born in New York State in 1843, served as ticket agent for the Chicago & North Western and the Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Northern railroads, a fact that possibly accounts for El Kahir's frequent railroad excursions to various Iowa towns to conduct Ceremonials. Upton C. Blake was a senior member of the law firm of Blake & Hormel. Born in Ohio in 1845, Blake graduated from Kenyon College in the Buckeye State in 1865.

El Kahir Temple manifested from the start a whole-hearted desire to foster the spread of Shrinedom throughout the State and Nation. Thus, on June 10, 1886, Cyrus W. Eaton and Edward I. Foster were elected to represent El Kahir at the triennial meeting of the Shrine to be held at Cleveland, Ohio, on June 14th. El Kahir was always well represented at National Conclaves. As a result, one of its Nobles, Edward I. Alderman, was elected Imperial Potentate of North America for the term 1908-1909. Only two Iowans have been thus honored.

Meanwhile, El Kahir was not neglecting the Iowa scene. On August 28, 1886, Potentate Eaton appointed the following Nobles to complete the roster of officers of El Kahir Temple:

John B. Bever
H. T. Milliken
Wm. B. Leach
E. Olin Soule

First Ceremonial Master
Second Ceremonial Master
Marshal
Captain of the Guard

Zelotus Farr Outer Guard
 Thomas R. Ercanbrack Director

The growth of El Kahir during the following fifteen years was truly gratifying.

<i>Annual Return</i>	<i>Last Return</i>	<i>Created During Year</i>	<i>Lapse</i>	<i>Total Membership</i>
12-31-1886	16	30	1	45
12-31-1887	45	70		116
12-31-1888	116	112		219
12-31-1890	305	87	-6	387
12-31-1891	387	179	-6	560
12-31-1900	1,681	125		1,329

The expansion of El Kahir during its first five years as well as its continued growth throughout the 1890's is attested in the above statistics. The membership loss in 1900 (there were only 17 deaths and 45 suspensions) must be attributed to the creation of Za-Ga-Zig Temple in Des Moines that year, when 415 El Kahir Nobles demitted to the newly-formed Temple. The prospective heavy loss of dues-paying members would be sufficient cause for any fraternity to oppose the establishment of a rival in its domain.

The best explanation for the spectacular growth of El Kahir was its Hegiras to various Iowa towns. These began in 1888, when an invitation of Marshalltown Nobles dated Demember 24, 1887, urged El Kahir to invade their fair city and stage a Ceremonial. The invitation was accepted and the following entry made in the Minutes.

Feby 22d 1888

Pursuant to a general notice given the members of the Temple the Caravan departed from the Oasis of Cedar Rapids via C & NW trail this date. . . . The work was exemplified in a complete & very satisfactory manner. The meeting was a success in every particular. Besides the 56 candidates there were fifty two members of the Temple present, with visiting Nobles.

Among those initiated was Sidney A. Foster, famous for his saying: "In all that is good, Iowa affords the best."

Another invitation came from Nobles of El Kahir living in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, together with a plea for help in securing a dispensation to establish a Temple. The invitation was accepted, support granted, and a special round-trip fare arranged. The following is a portion of the handsome printed invitations sent El Kahir Nobles:

The officers accompanied by many Nobles of El Kahir Temple, will depart from Cedar Rapids in special conveyance, B.C.R. & N.R.R., on the evening of Thursday, May 24th, at 10:50 P.M., arriving at Sioux Falls at 11 o'clock A.M., Friday, May 25th. Leaving at 3 o'clock P.M., Saturday, 26th. Fare for round trip, \$10. Kindly inform the "Katib" if you desire to accompany the caravan, that due preparation may be MADE FOR YOUR accommodation.

Geo. W. Bever, *Katib*.

Cyrus W. Eaton, *Sultani*.

According to one eye-witness the banquet at the Cataract House left lingering memories for all who attended the Sioux Falls Ceremonial.

The delicious spread was enough to have tempted a Bedouin from his revenge, and to have set fluttering in the heart of a desert anchorite a desire for comradeship and luxury. . . . Enchanting music swelled through the apartment, its harmonious rhythm finding echoes in the happy hearts of the throng. Beautiful flowers charmed the senses of sight and smell.

The menu consisted of the following, a truly imposing array of delicacies.

Sliced Oranges, Bananas aux Glaise

Shrimp au Mayonnaise
Chicken Salad

Pineapple Salad
Salmon Salad

Assorted Fruit Jellies
Boned Capon
Cold Ham
Round of Pork
Leg of Mutton

Southwell's Fruit Jams
Cold Turkey
Beef Tongue Glaise
Roast Beef
Roast Veal

a la Mode Beef

Punch Aux Sauterne
Fresh Strawberries

Tutti Frutti Panache Ice Cream

Assorted Cake Lady Cake Angel Food
Fancy Macaroons Champagne Kisses
Sponge Drops Lady Fingers

Mixed Nuts Layer Raisins Oranges
Figs Bananas
French Coffee Chocolate

The visit of El Kahir Nobles to Sioux Falls was remembered long after their return to Cedar Rapids across the "sandy dangers of the Hawkeye Sahara." According to one Sioux Falls Noble who witnessed their departure:

They are adopted into the family. To Arab hospitality is added kinship, and as they go forth they take the blessings of those whom they have made happy by their courtesy. May the red on their fez never wane!

Thus it was that El Kahir took a leading role in establishing El Riad Temple, the first Temple in Dakota Territory, one year before that Territory achieved Statehood in 1889.

Not content with their trips to Marshalltown and Sioux Falls, the El Kahir Nobility accepted a third invitation in 1888 to visit the Oasis of Medinah Temple in Chicago. Thirty-five Nobles made up the caravan that left the Oasis at Cedar Rapids to make the Pilgrimage to Medinah aboard the "new Pullman Camel" *Vancouver*. A reception committee met the delegation at the depot and escorted the weary Pilgrims to the Tremont House.

El Kahir continued its Hegiras to the various Oases in Iowa, a map of its membership on October 18, 1888, showing 61 Nobles in Cedar Rapids, 33 in Marshalltown, 18 in Des Moines, 11 in Marion, and the remainder located in thirty other towns.

Due recognition of their labors was given the officers of El Kahir at the annual meeting on De-

cember 26, 1888. After the regular business had been taken up, George W. Bever recorded in his Minutes:

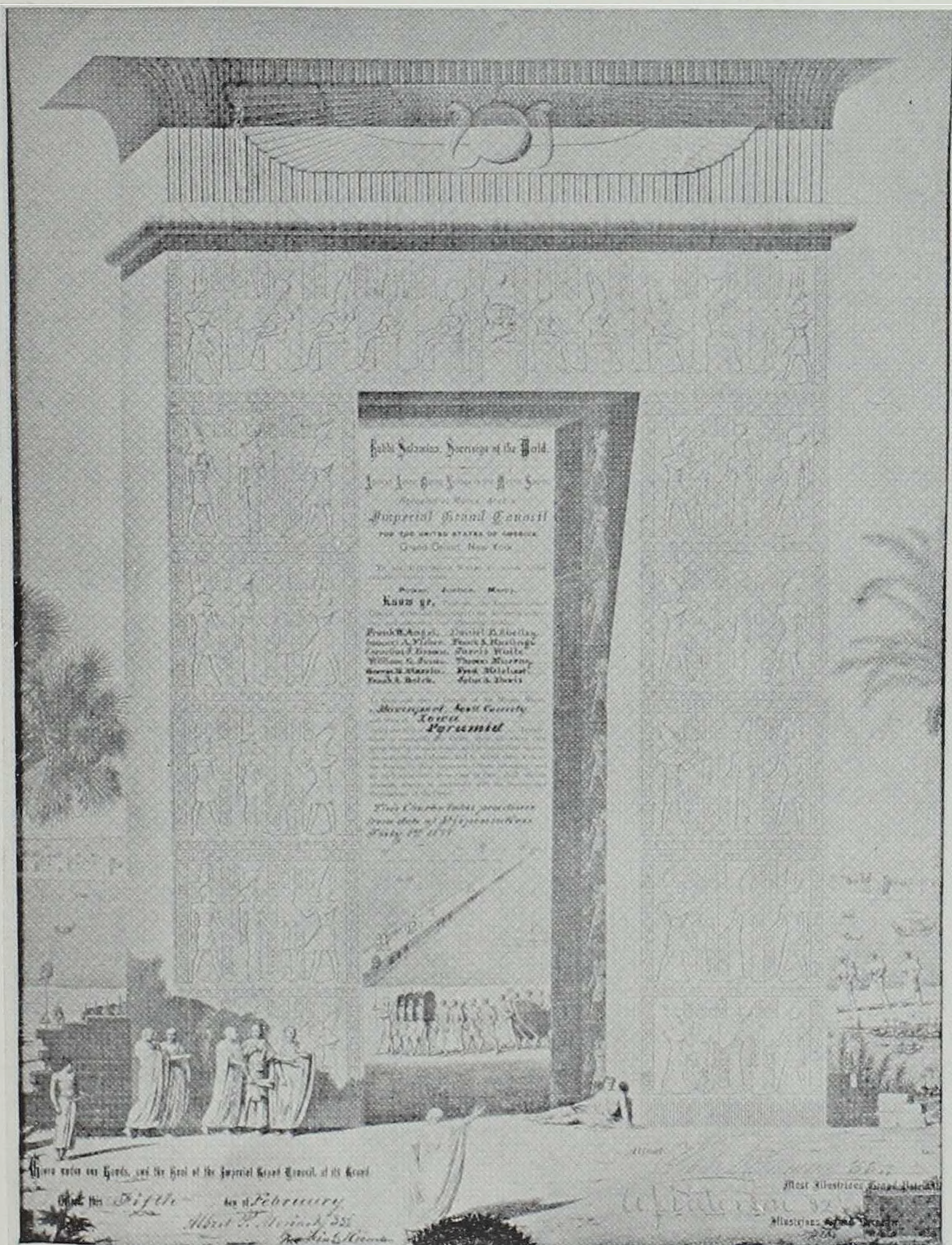
Right here, a very happy incident occurred, which will always be remembered by the Recorder with the greatest of pleasure. — Noble Buren R. Sherman, (may his shadow never grow less) stepped out to the front, & in his most inimitable manner, spoke of the glory and renown of El Kahir Temple, and that although less than three years old, her name and fame had spread both far and near, due to the personal interest, enthusiasm, and devotion of her officers. After paying them a just tribute for their labors, he approached the Recorder & in behalf of many Nobles, presented him with a beautiful . . . etching of the "Ships of the Desert."

The Rec's wits had a total eclipse and as a result of his surprise, responded in a very feeble and ignoble manner.
. . .

Buren R. Sherman was the first, but by no means the last, Governor of Iowa to be inducted into the Ancient Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine.

An outstanding characteristic of El Kahir has been the enthusiasm, loyalty and devotion of its Nobility to their Temple. On November 20, 1936, on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee Ceremonial, the only living Charter Member, Illustrious Calvin G. Greene, recalled this spirit of the founding fathers:

In the year 1886 . . . Cyrus Waldgrave Eaton and George Woltz Bever, Past Commanders of Apollo Commandery and Scottish Rite Masons, both of whom had



THE FIRST SHRINE CHARTER IN IOWA

Shrinedom was in its infancy when Kaaba Temple (originally Pyramid Temple) received its charter on February 5, 1878. Such charters are proudly displayed in the Temple and are the subject of much study and discussion as members look back over their yesteryears.

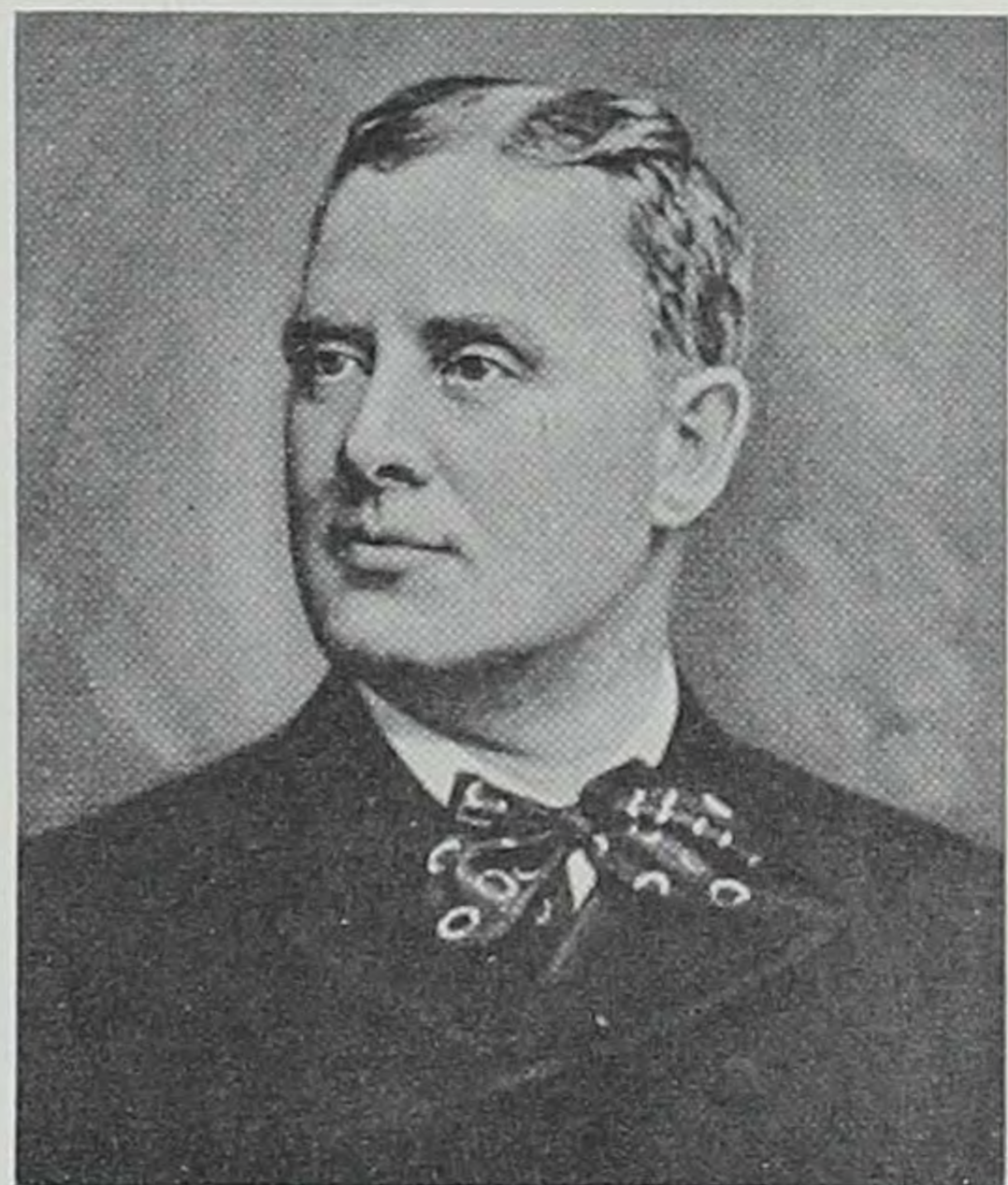
KAABA POTENTATES FROM 1878 TO 1955



FOUNDERS OF THE A.A.O.N.M.S.



DR. WALTER FLEMING



WILLIAM J. FLORENCE

RECENT POTENTATES OF KAABA



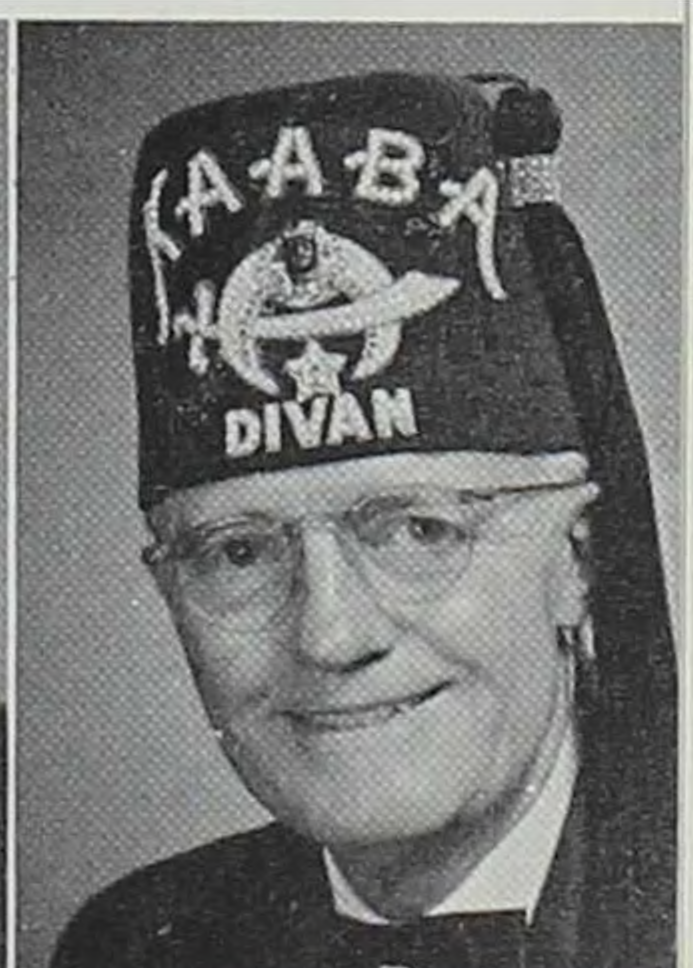
CARL R. ACKERMAN
1963



KENNETH E. NAUGLE
1962



WALTER E. PAUSTIAN
1961



CHRIS W. CUNDIFF
1960



PAUL B. MCCRAY
1959



EDWIN C. CHENEY
1958



RAYMOND DRAKE
1957



DON MAXWELL
1956

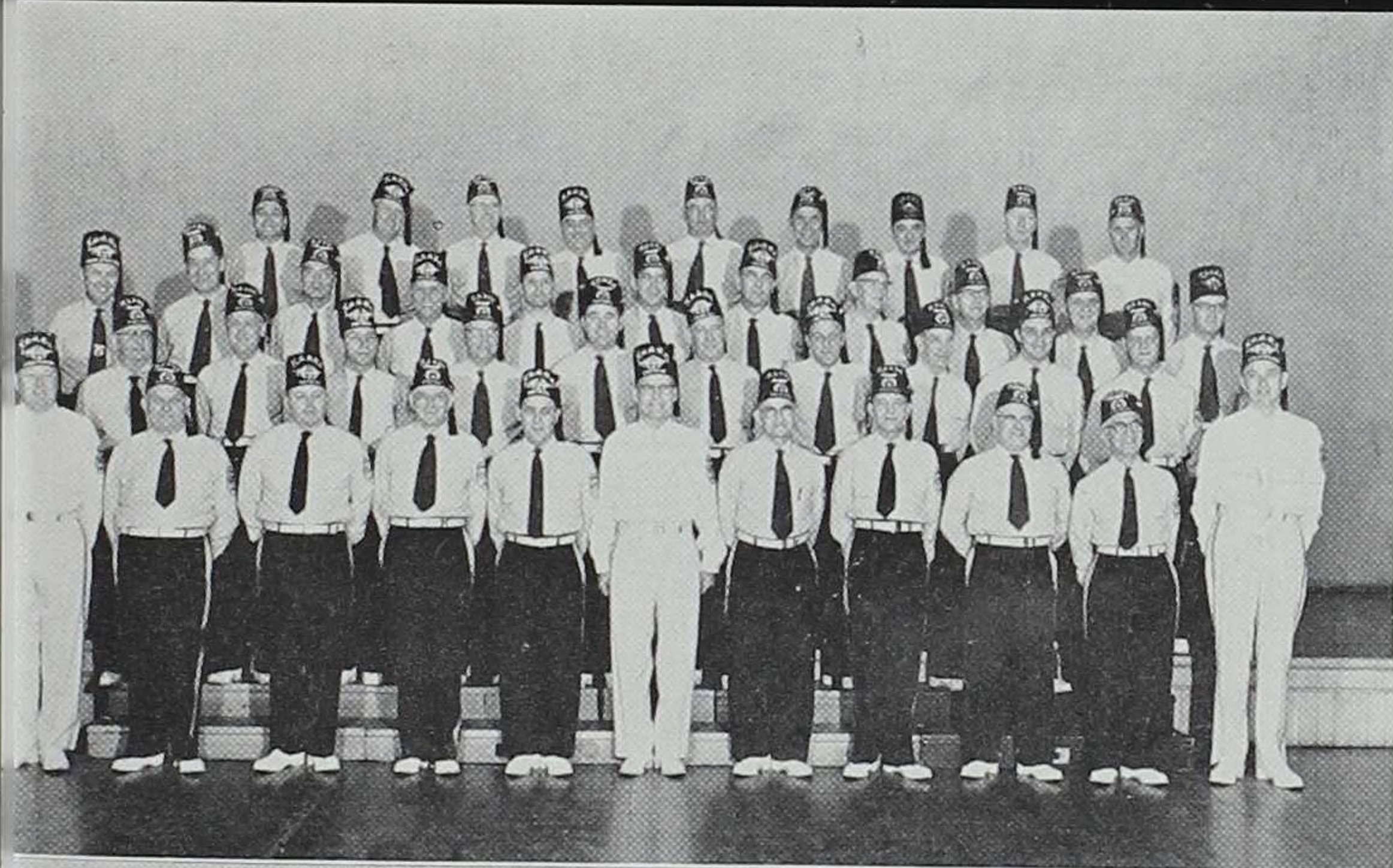
EARLY KAABA UNIFORMED UNITS



Kaaba Temple All Shrine Patrol



Kaaba Temple All Shrine Band



KAABA
TEMPLE

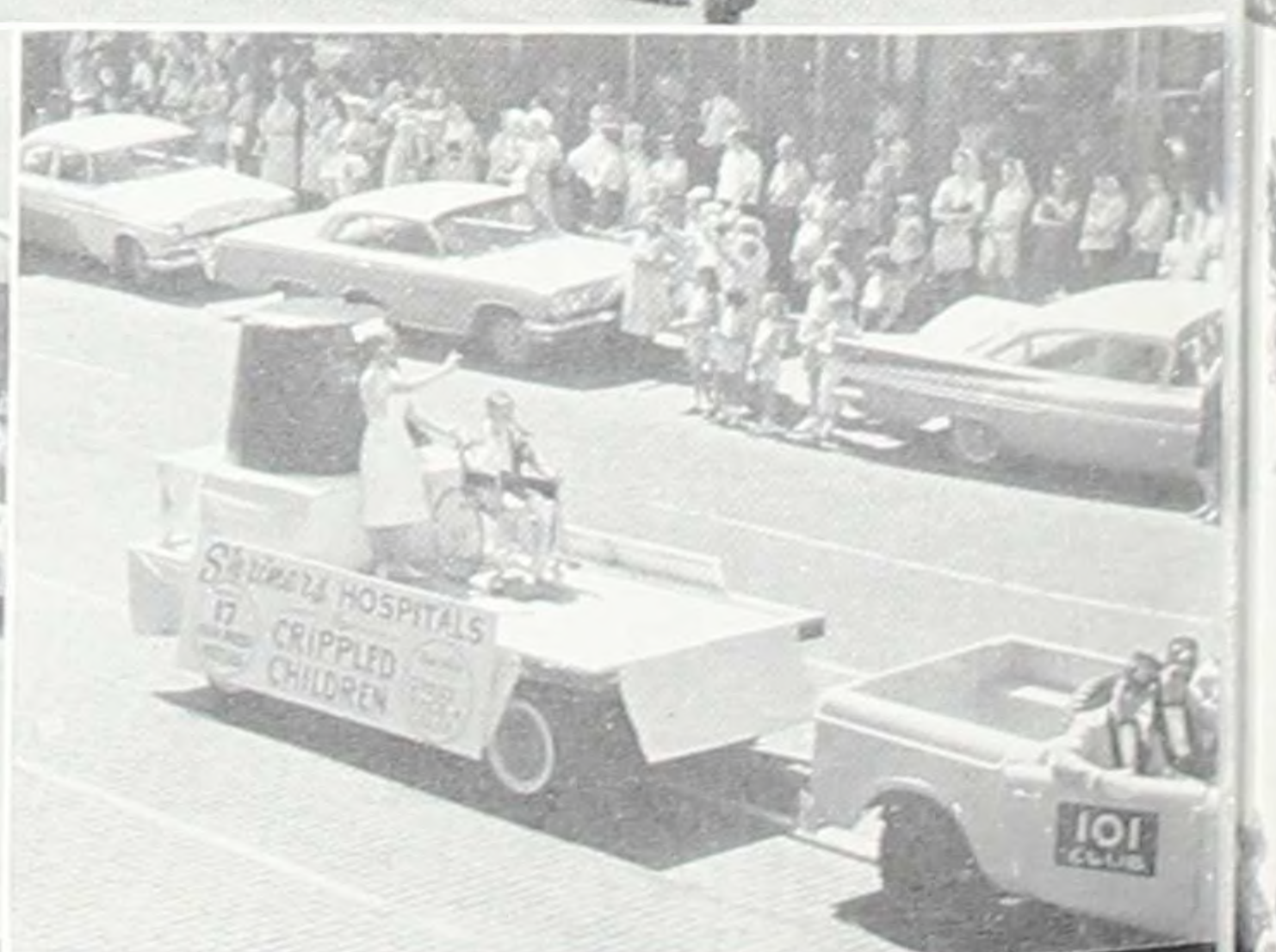
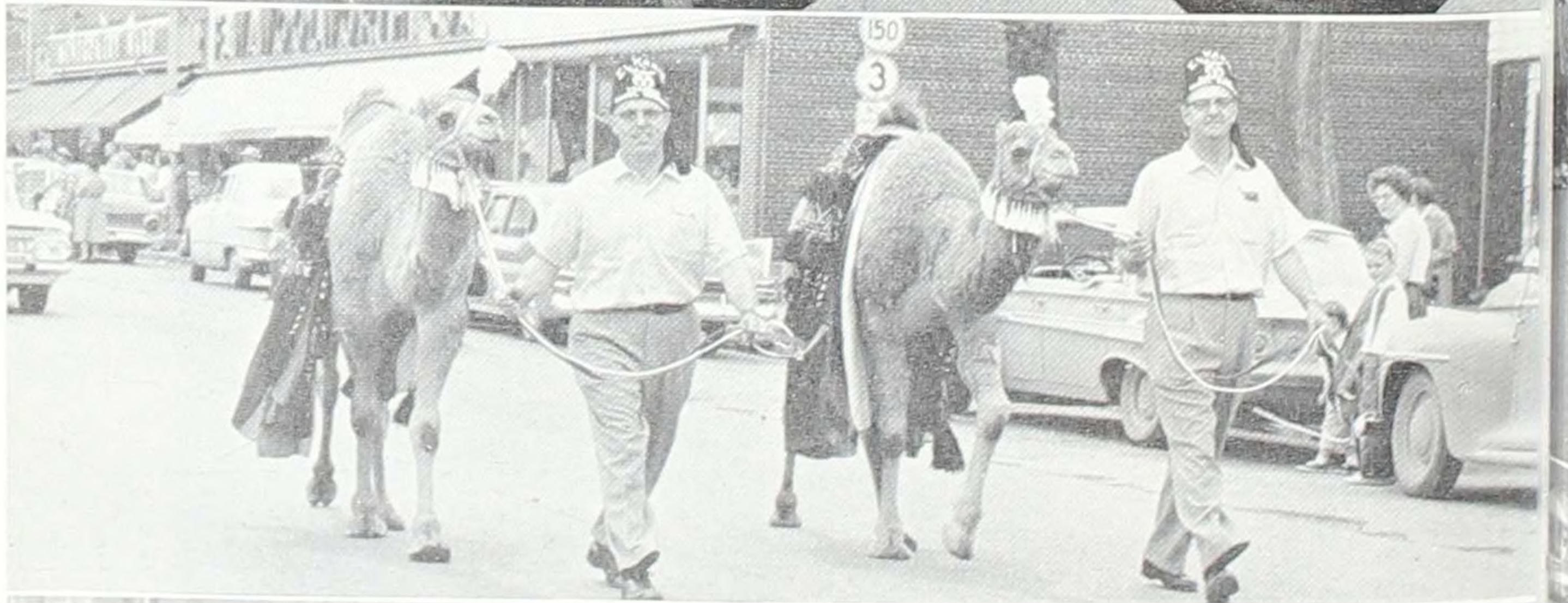
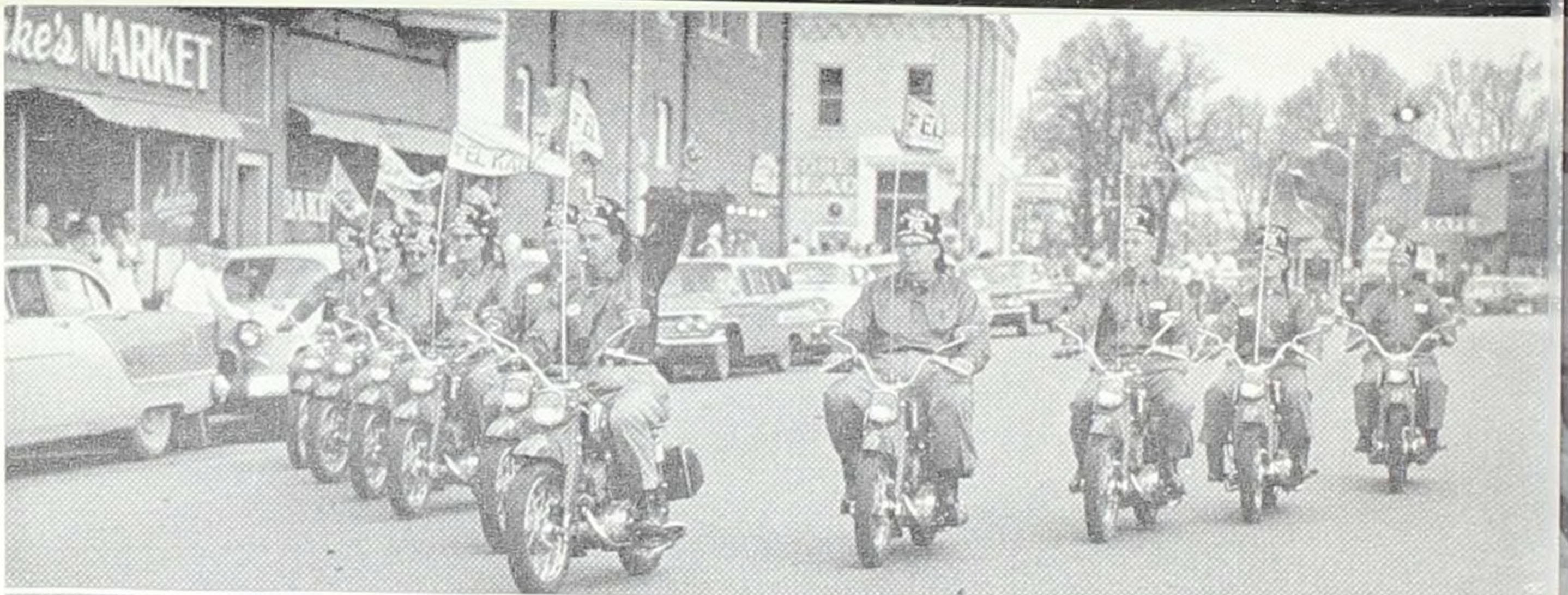
Patrol

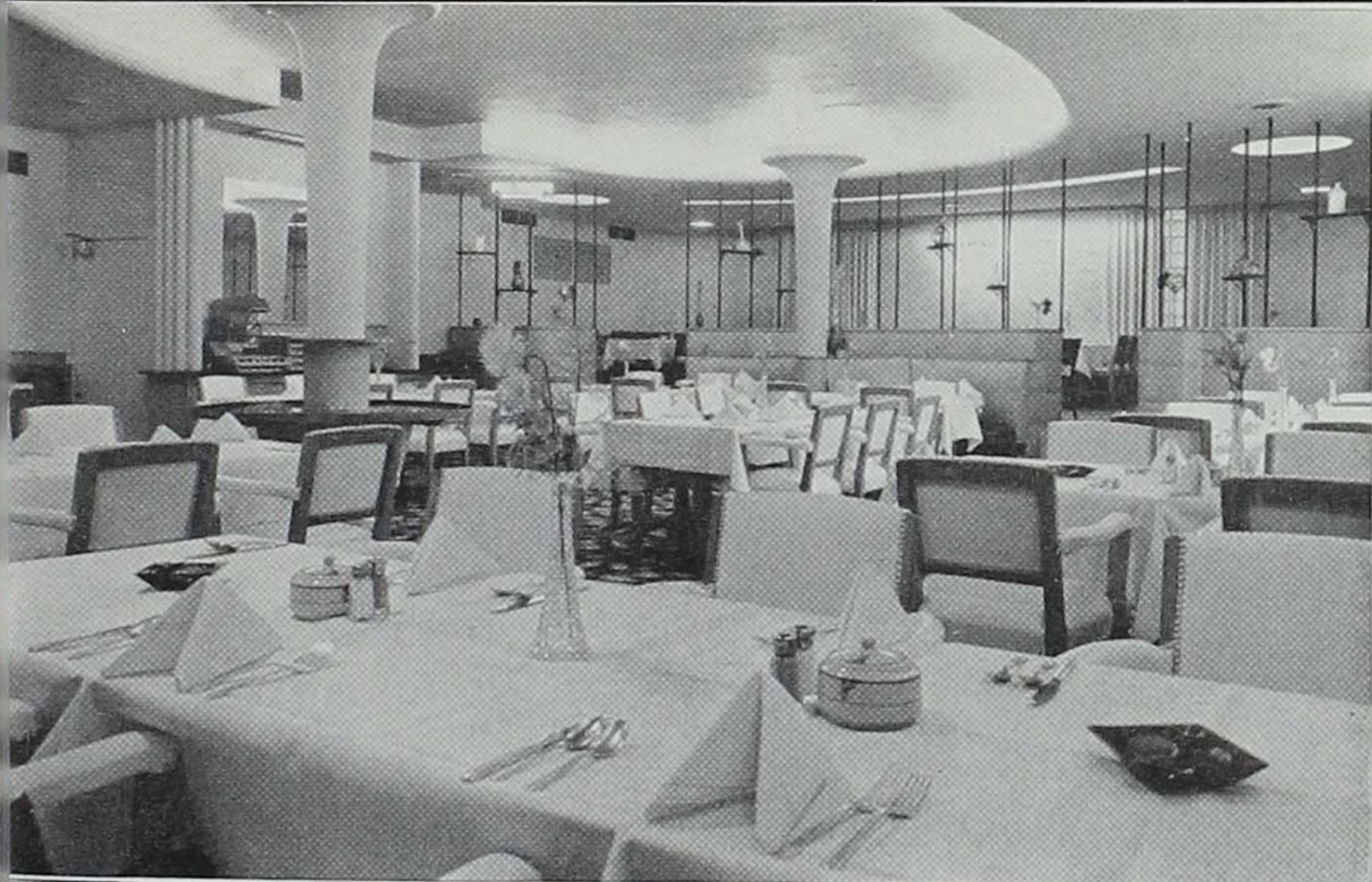


Band



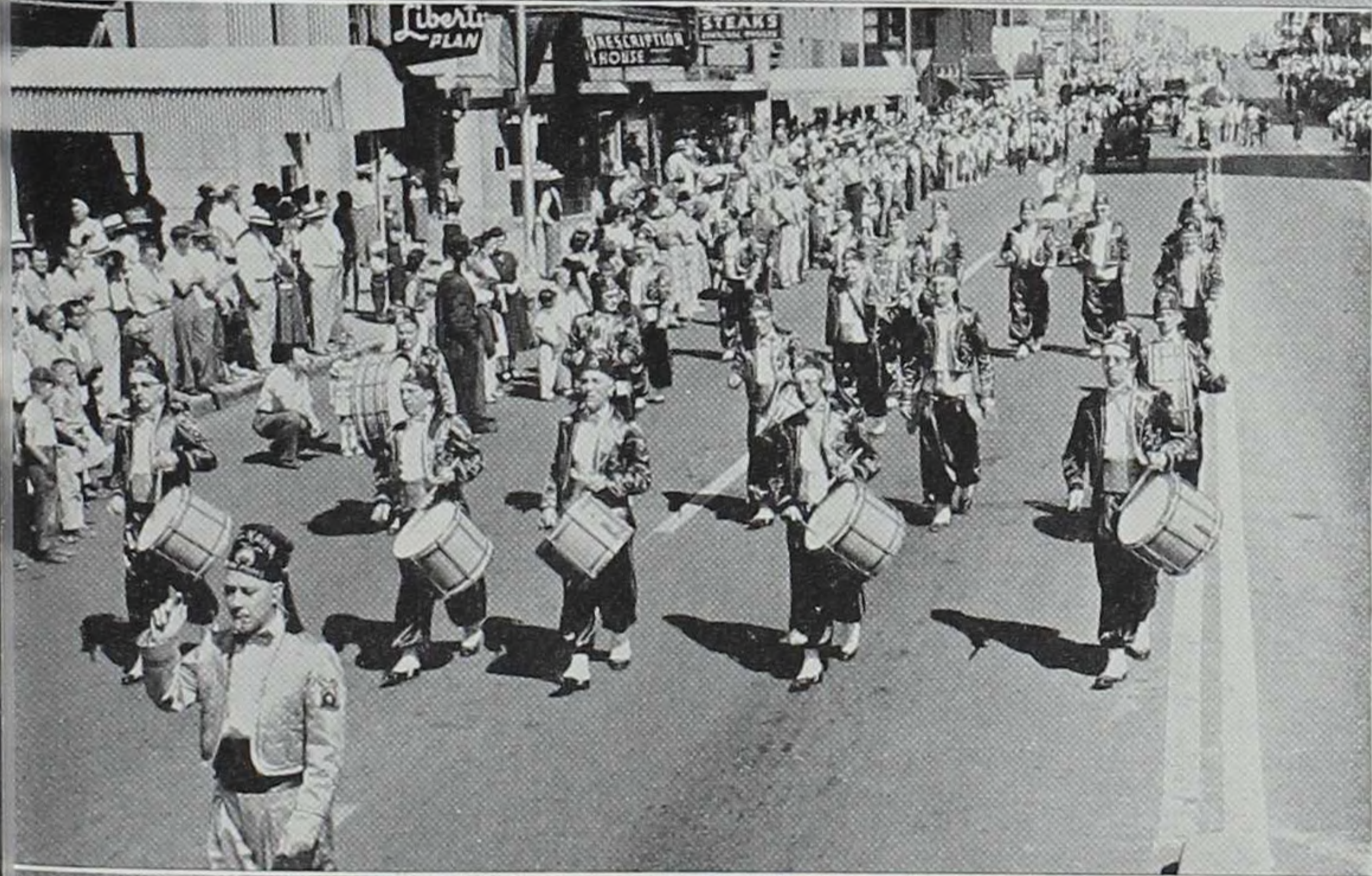
On Parade





EL KAHIR

Embassy Club
Dining Room
Cedar Rapids



Drum and
Bugle Corps



On
Parade

Opposite:
El Kahir
Entertains
Cedar Rapids

Photo-Gravure
Picture Section

Des Moines Sunday Register

SECTION EIGHT

JUNE 12, 1921.

Eight Pages of
Art Illustrations

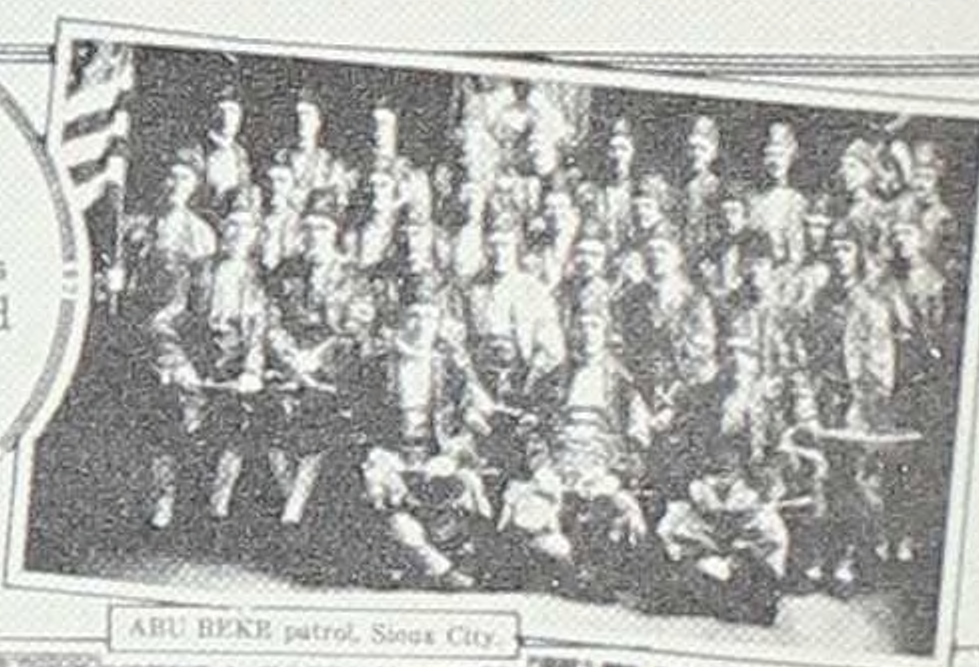
Welcome,
Shriners!

These Iowa temples
extend the glad hand
for your visit to
Des Moines.

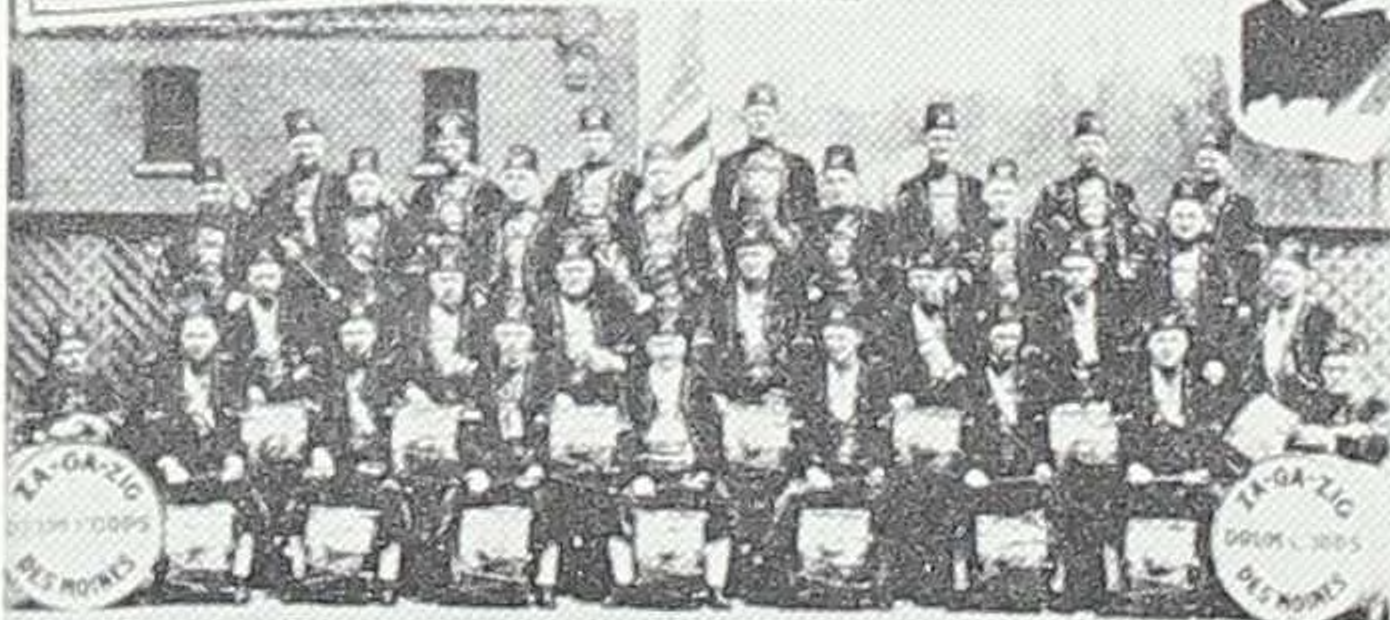


KAABA temple patrol, Davenport.

EARL MILLS of
Des Moines, candi-
date for Imperial
Outer Guard.



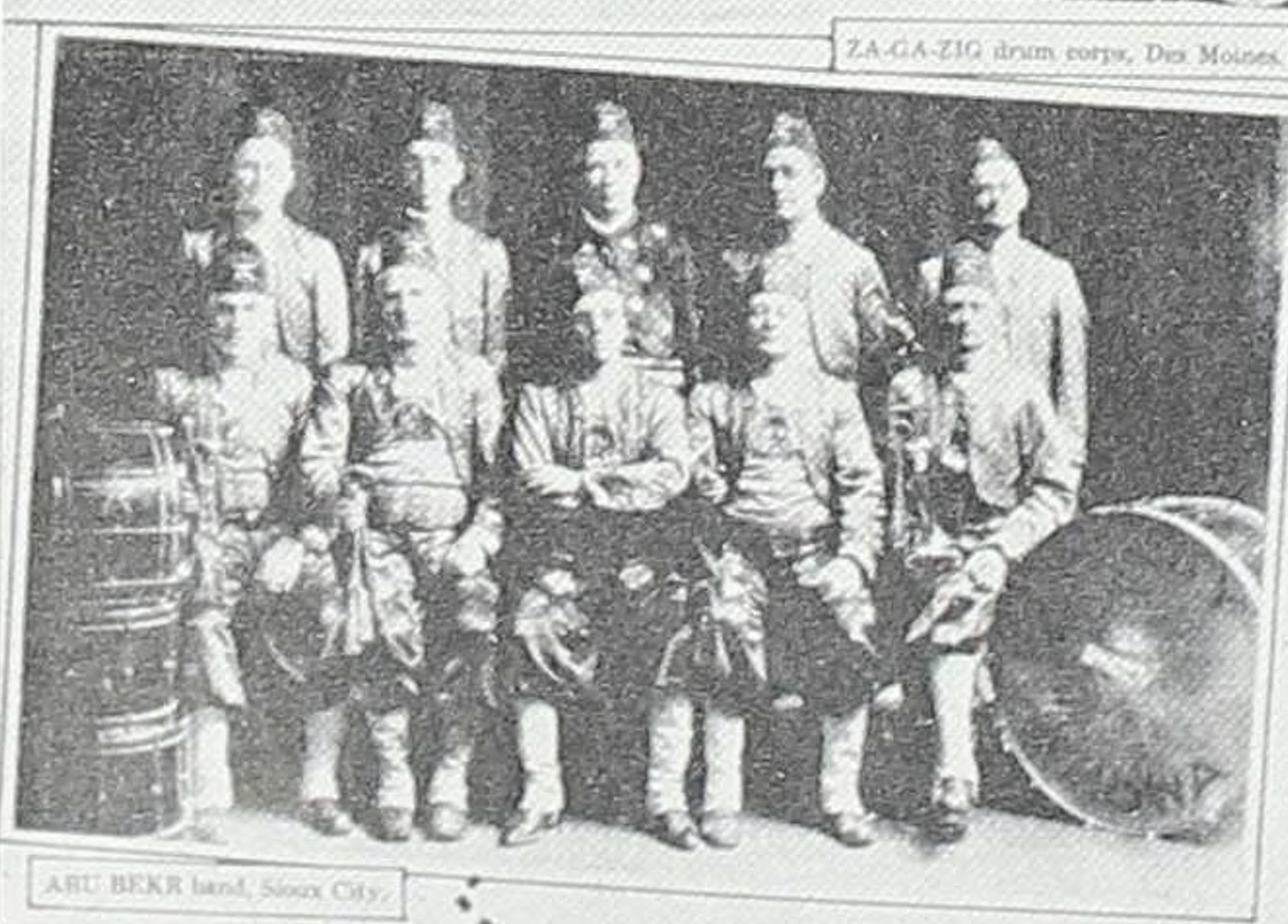
ABU BEKE patrol, Sioux City.



ZAGA-ZIG drum corps, Des Moines.



EL-KAHIR temple patrol, Cedar
Rapids.



ABU BEKE band, Sioux City.



ZAGA-ZIG patrol, Des Moines.



BAND OF ZAGA-ZIG temple, Des
Moines.



EL-KAHIR temple band, Cedar
Rapids.

Uniformed Units from all four Shrine Temples in Iowa were given full page display on the front page of the *Des Moines Sunday Register* in June, 1921. Insert is of Earl C. Mills, past Za-Ga-Zig Potentate, who was destined to become Imperial Potentate of all Shrinedom in 1932.



Kaaba Temple is observing the 85th Anniversary of its founding at Davenport in 1878. It was the tenth Temple founded in the United States, the first in Iowa, and the first west of Cincinnati, Ohio. Kaaba is the second largest Temple in Iowa and has initiated more than 13,000 candidates in 248 Ceremonials.



Caravan of El Kahir Temple

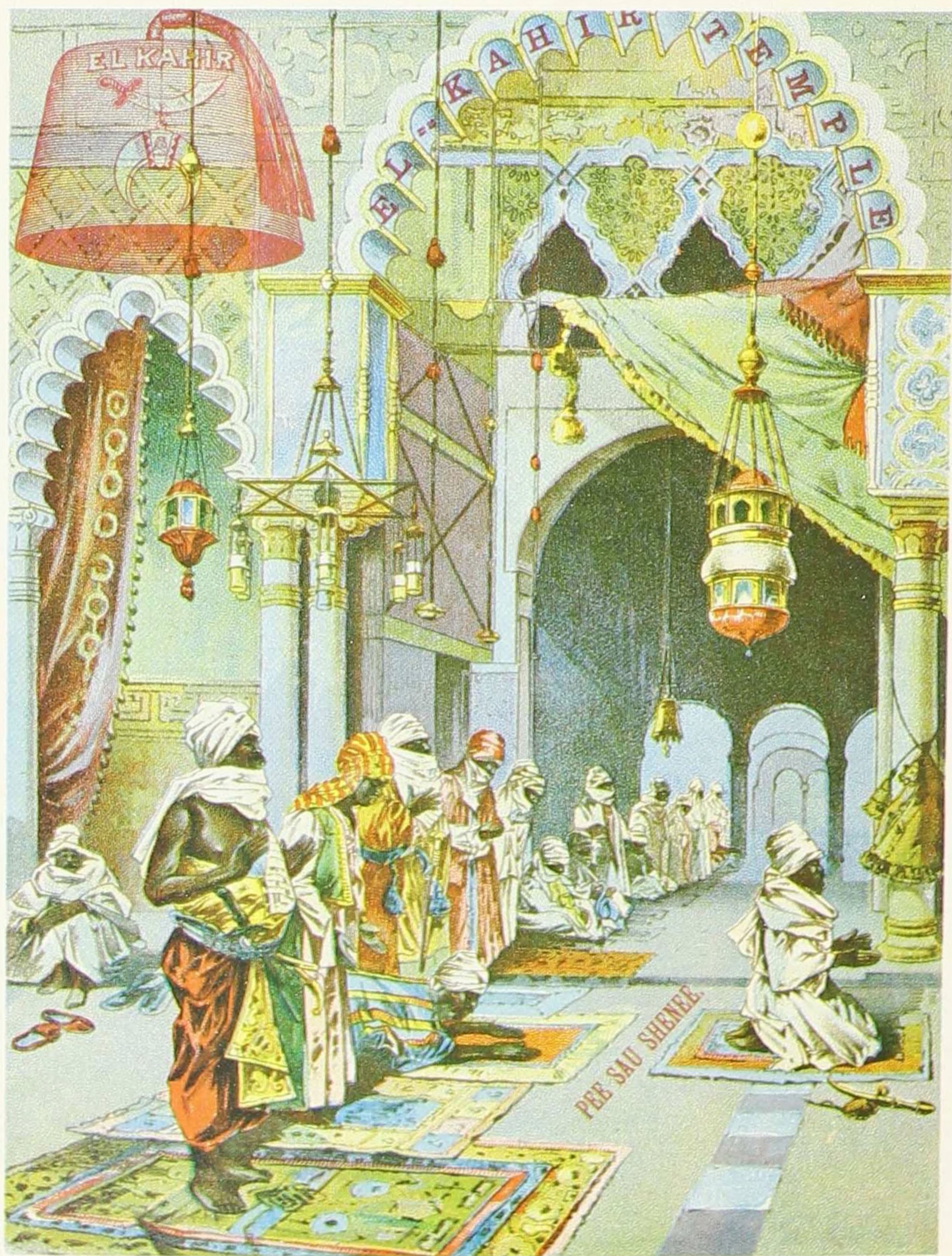


Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1888.



Caravan of El Kahir Temple

Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1888.



Oriental Splendor Greets the Weary Sons of the Desert at Their Mecca in the Oasis.

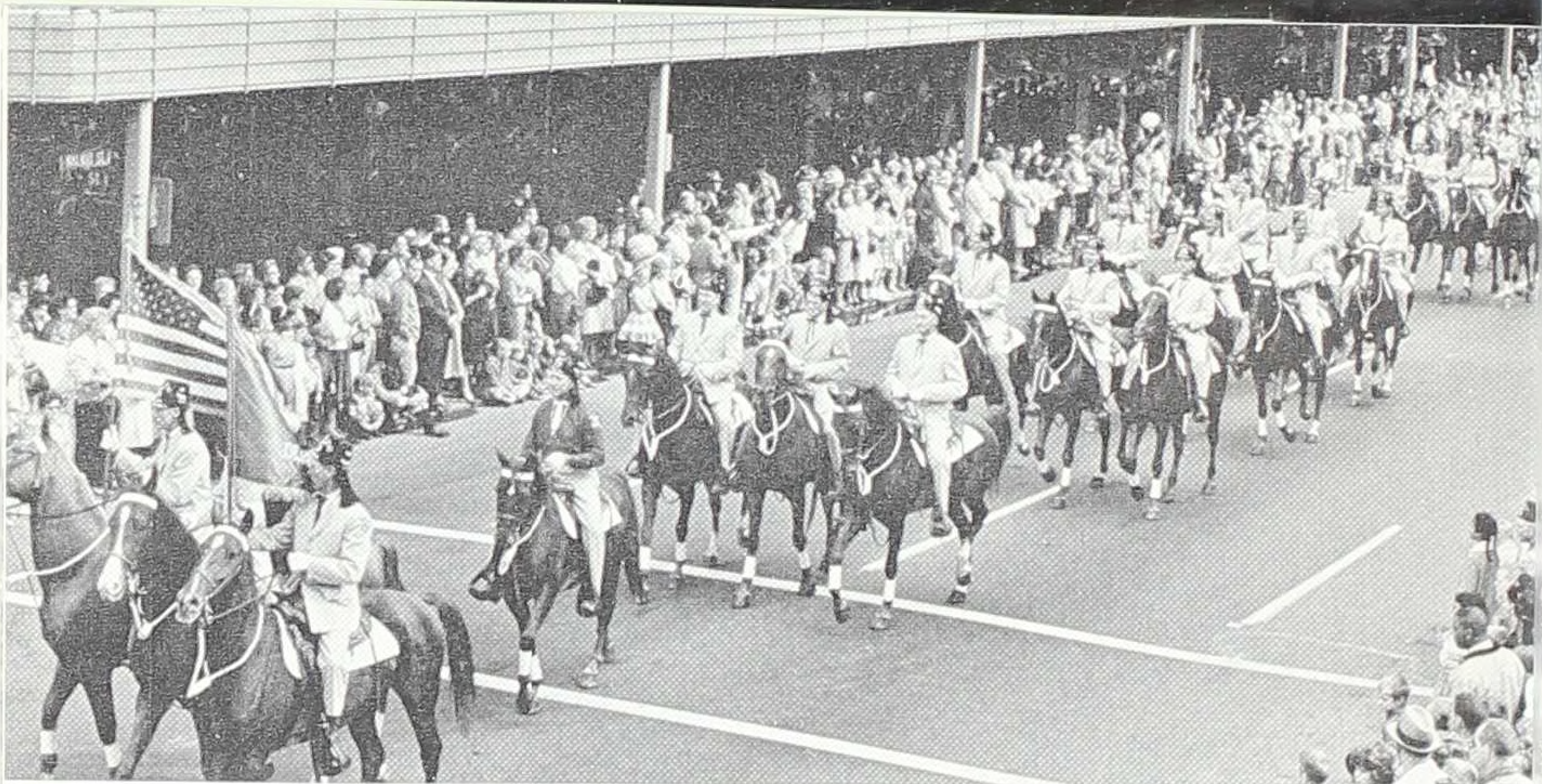
SMALL ZA-GA-ZIG TEMPLE UNITS



Saxophone Sextette—Organized 1955



Troubadours—Organized 1958



Center:
Street scene in Za-Ga-Zig, Egypt.

Za-Ga-Zig in Old Egypt never witnessed pageantry comparable to what Des Moines saw in the Central States Ceremonial in 1962!





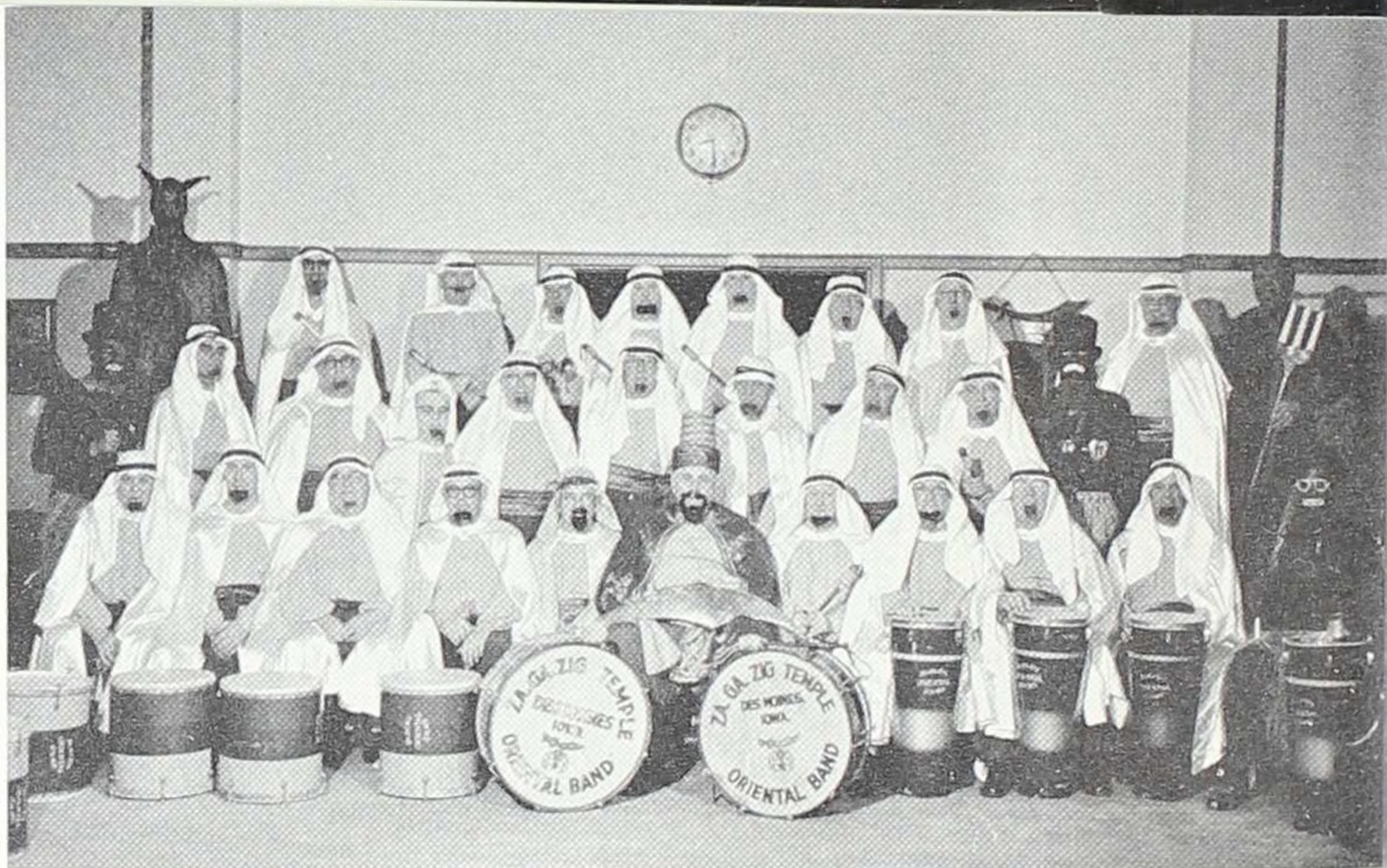
High Jinks
at the
Central
States
Conclave!
Des Moines
September 22
1962



Waterloo
Shrine Club
Oriental Band

ZA-GA-ZIG

Oriental Band

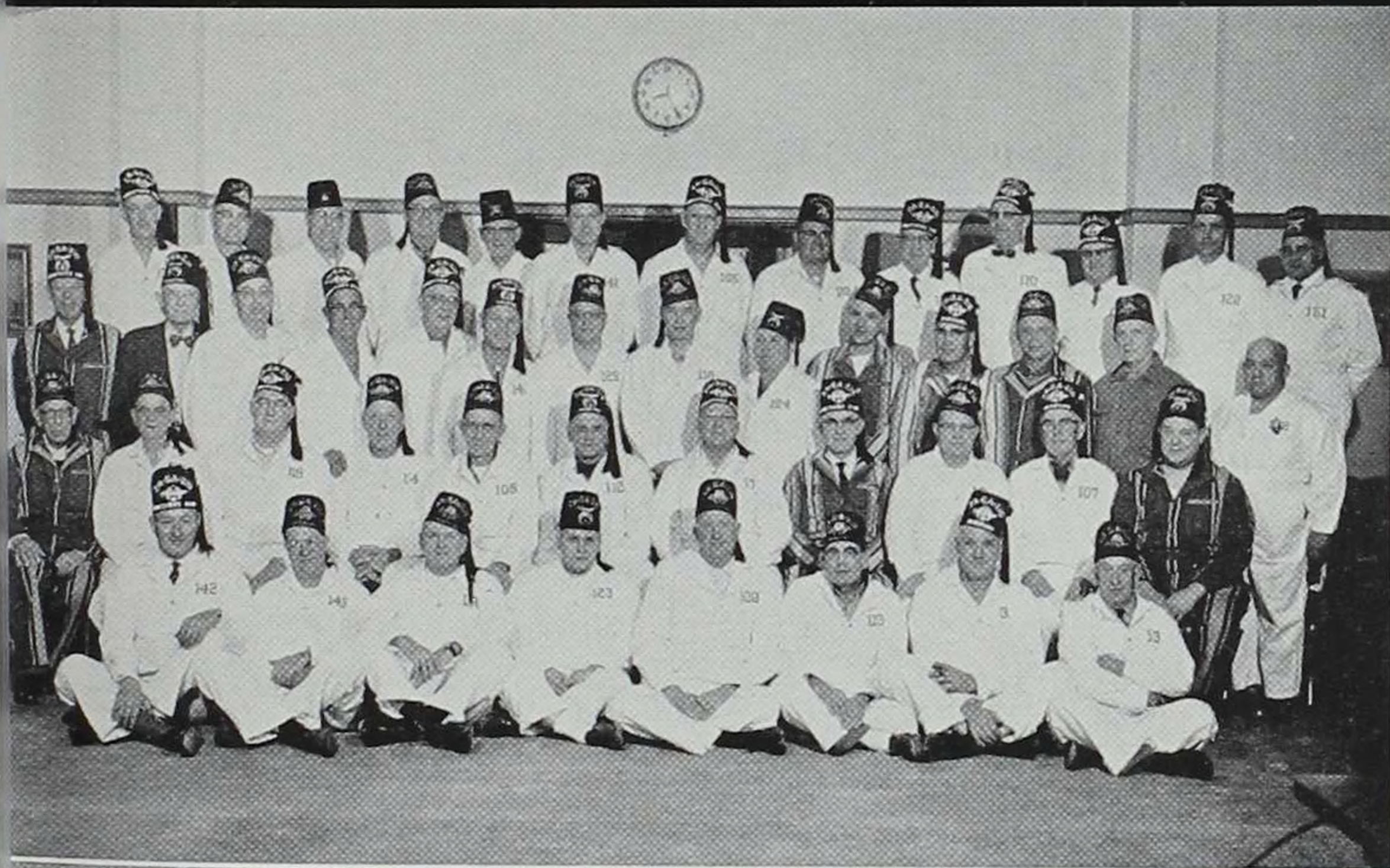


Chanters



Shrine Band



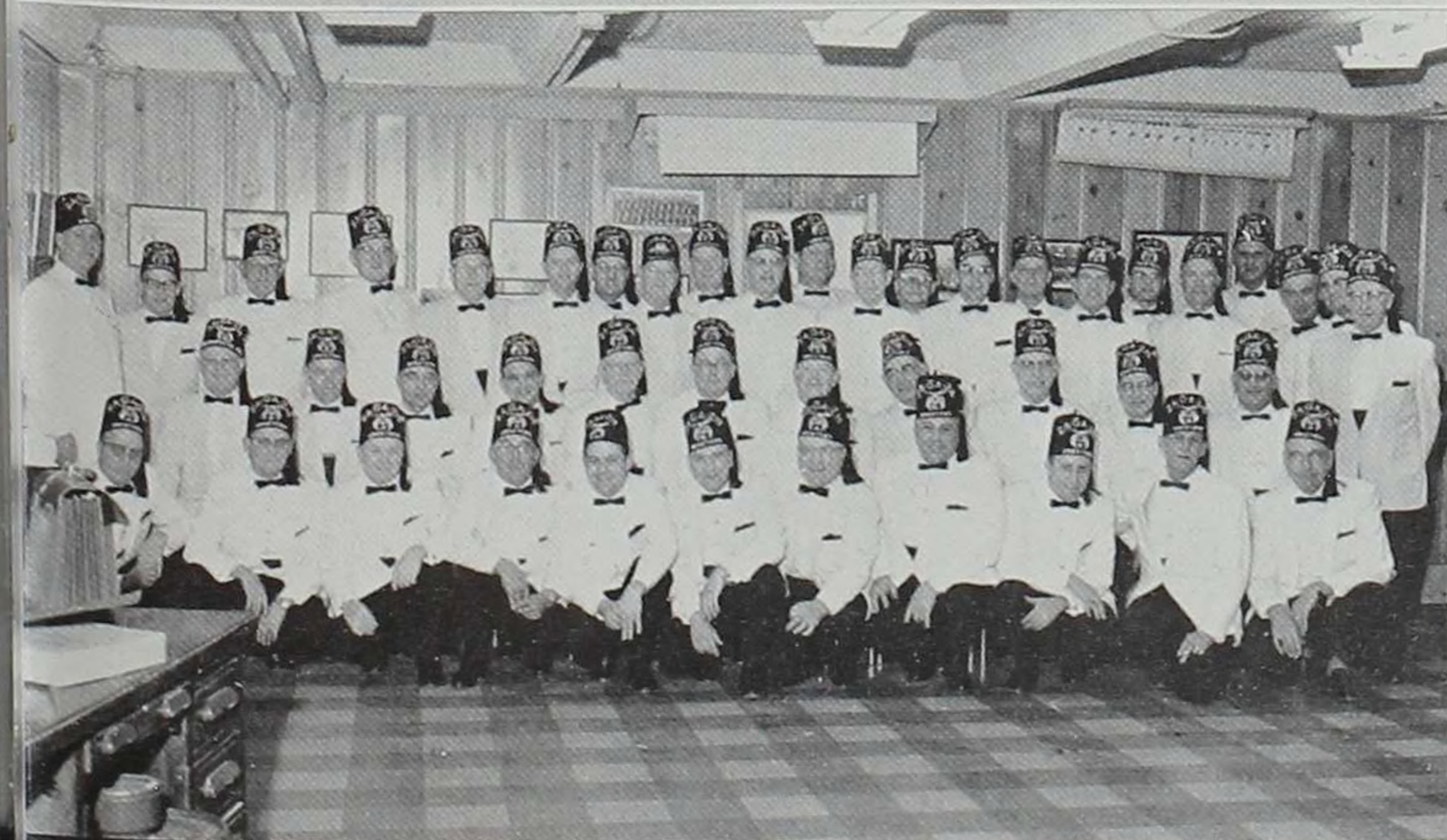


ZA-GA-ZIG

Bedouins
or
Directors
Staff

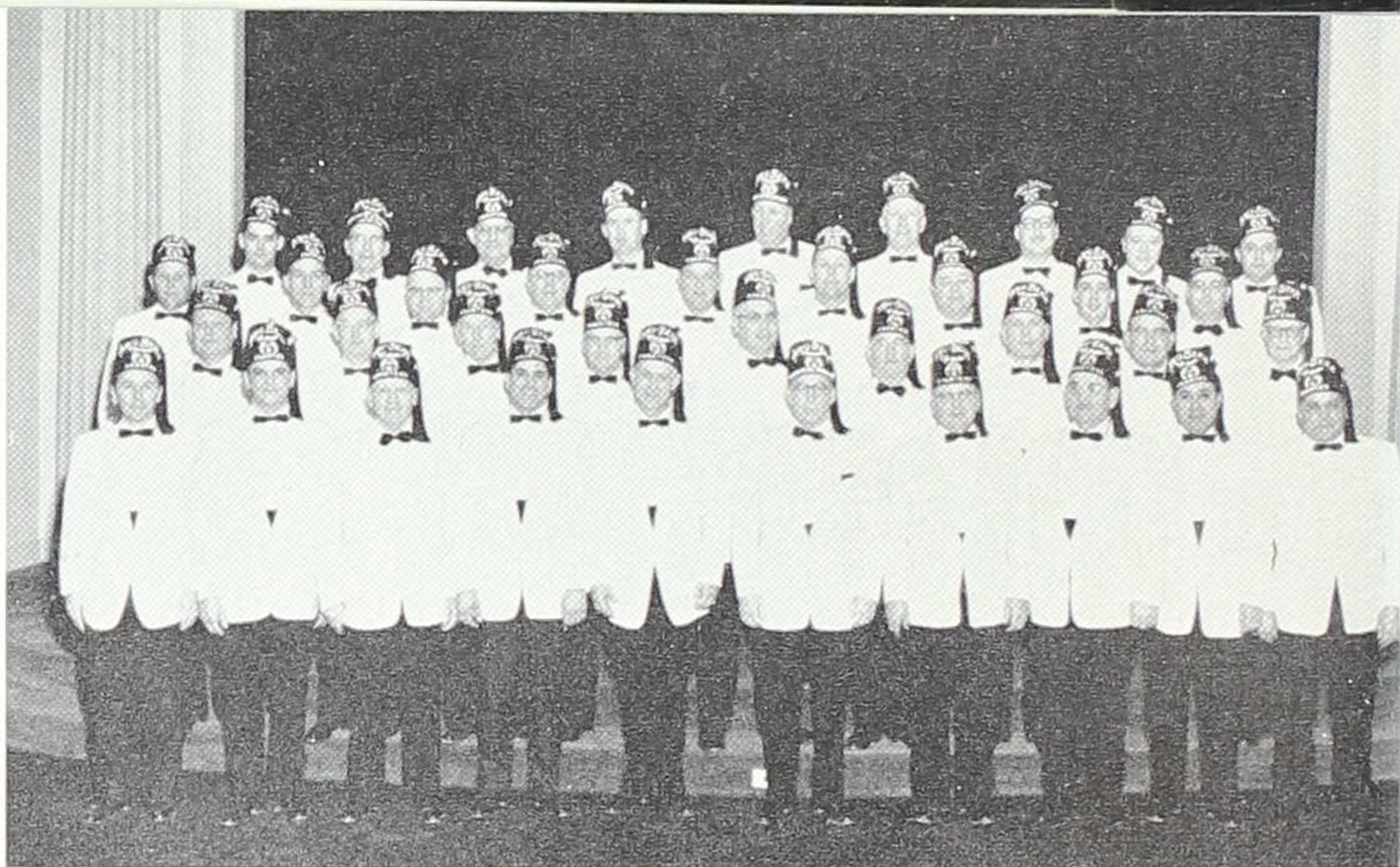


Marshalltown
Shrine Club
Tin Lizzy
Patrol



Greeters

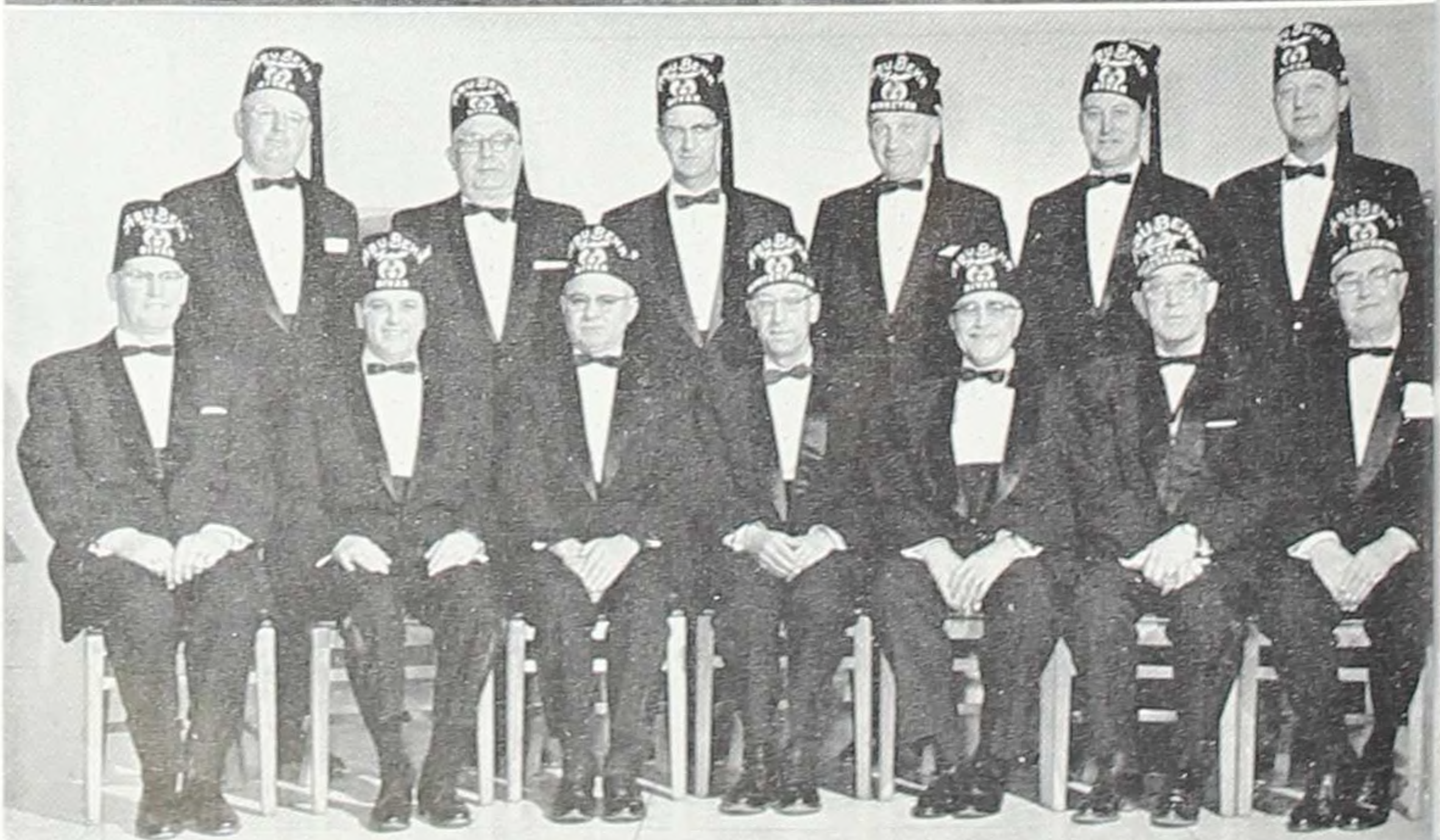
ABU BEKR



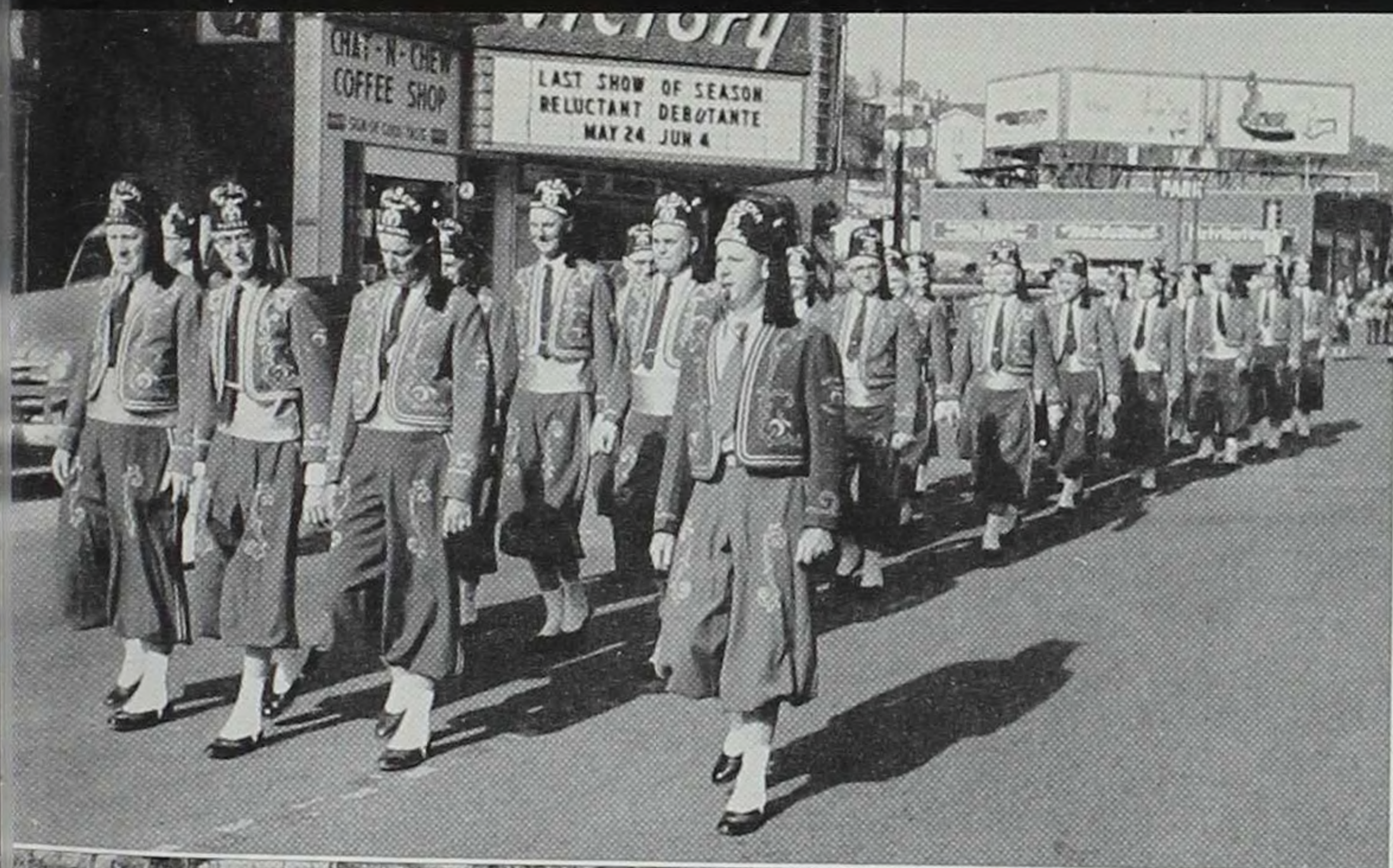
Chanters



Foot Patrol
(1909)

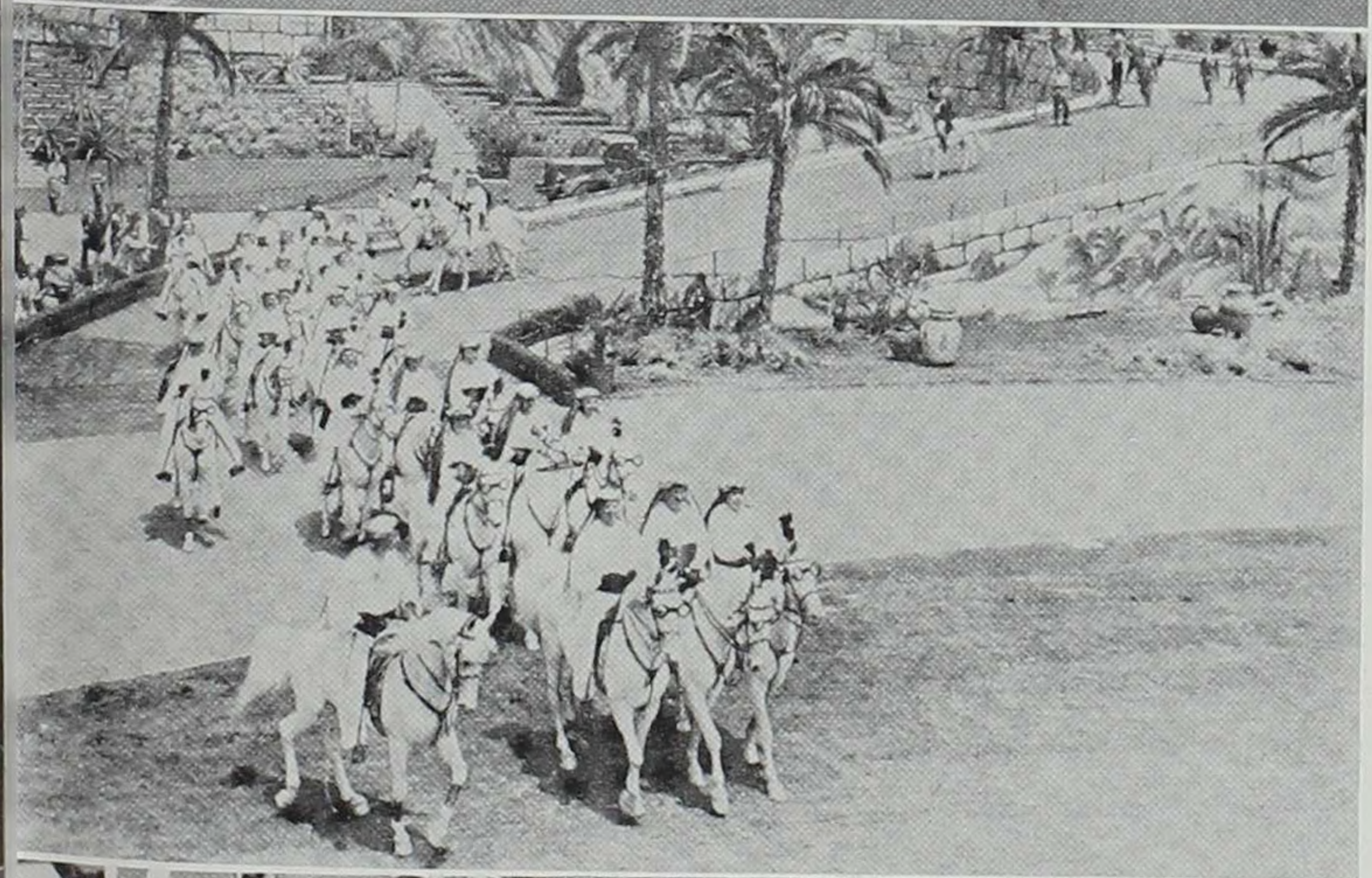


Divan (1963)



ABU BEKR

Foot Patrol



White Horse
Mounted
Patrol

Horses Wore
Horn-Rimmed
Glasses at
Los Angeles to
Honor Imperial
Potentate
Harold Lloyd.



Oriental
Band &
Motor
Scooters

SEVENTEEN SHRINE HOSPITALS — THE FRUITION OF A DREAM



Montreal Unit, Montreal, Que., Canada



Winnipeg Unit, Winnipeg, Man., Canada



Mexico City Unit, Mexico City, Mexico



Shreveport Unit, Shreveport, La.



Portland Unit, Portland, Ore.



Los Angeles Unit, Los Angeles, Cal.



Lexington Unit, Lexington, Ky.

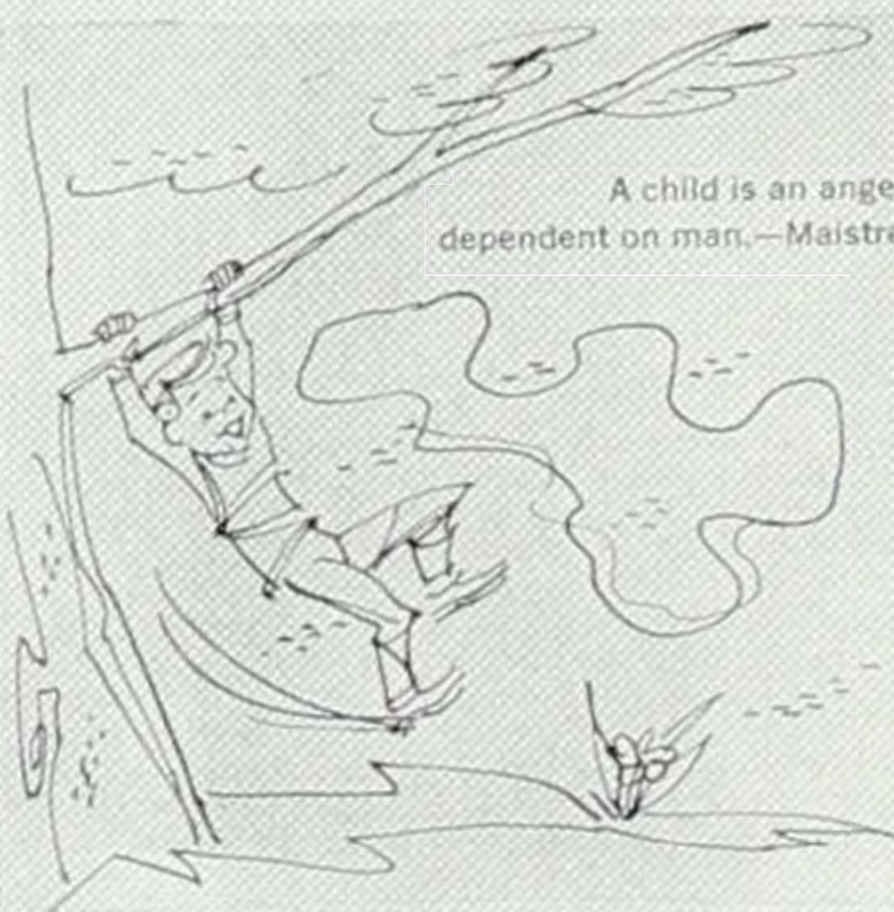


San Francisco Unit, San Francisco, Cal.



Springfield Unit,
Springfield, Mass.

Shriners Hospitals for Crippled Children



Forty years of Tender Loving Care



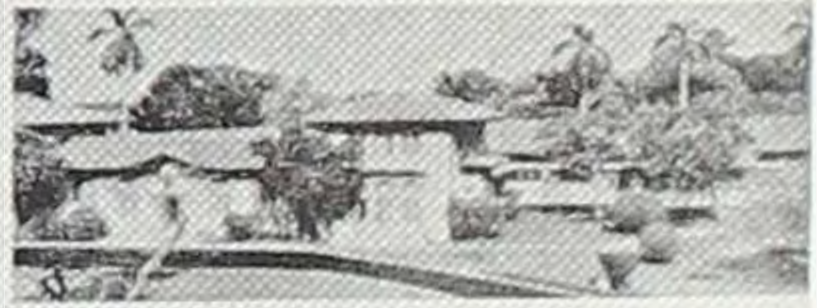
Philadelphia Unit, Philadelphia, Pa.



Chicago Unit, Chicago, Ill.



St. Louis Unit, St. Louis, Mo.



Honolulu Unit, Honolulu, Hawaii



Twin Cities Unit, Minneapolis, Minn.



Intermountain Unit, Salt Lake City, Utah



Greenville Unit, Greenville, S. C.



Spokane Unit, Spokane, Wash.

SHRINERS HOSPITALS FOR CRIPPLED CHILDREN—EXPENDITURES 1961

Unit	Operating Expense	Building & Equipment Additions	Total	Unit	Operating Expense	Building & Equipment Additions	Total
CHICAGO	\$411,362	\$6,366	\$417,729	SAN FRANCISCO	\$454,207	\$1,574	\$455,782
GREENVILLE	357,251	8,709	365,960	SHREVEPORT	308,880	1,642	310,523
HONOLULU	252,380	6,896	259,277	SPOKANE	280,940	4,133	285,074
SALT LAKE CITY	347,548	16,939	364,487	TWIN CITIES	446,408	77,015	523,423
LEXINGTON	339,301	16,028	355,329	MONTREAL	319,934	169,331	489,266
LOS ANGELES	459,074	2,308	461,382	WINNIPEG	277,638	383,323	660,961
PHILADELPHIA	417,858	15,553	433,411	SPRINGFIELD	379,842	13,766	393,609
PORTLAND	452,997	52,140	505,137	MEXICO CITY	97,629	439,883	537,512
ST. LOUIS	574,412	761,657	1,336,070				
				Totals	\$6,177,670	\$1,977,269	\$8,154,939

attended Grand Encampments of Knights Templar and there met some of the outstanding Shriners of that day, joined in determining that a Temple of the Shrine should be established here.

They selected five others to become Charter members with them. I was one of those so favored. We co-operated heartily with our two active and inspiring chiefs, diligently attended the frequent early meetings, rehearsed our several parts in the ritual and did our best to convey to pioneer candidates some knowledge of what it was all about.

Nobles Eaton and Bever were imbued with the spirit of the Order and gave vital expression to it. Much of this spirit became absorbed by their associates and still more by some of the candidates. This new blood caused the body to flourish, began to fill official stations, represent the Temple in the Imperial Council, attract larger classes of candidates and establish a durable financial basis.

With occasional natural back-sets, progress continued, so that now, in its Fiftieth year, El Kahir holds a place, strong and of high character, not only in Shrinedom, but in the opinion of other Masons and of the public.

The first uniformed El Kahir unit was its Patrol, organized under the direction of Potentate W. G. Haskell in 1907. The Patrol attended the Imperial Council at St. Paul in 1908 where Noble Edwin I. Alderman of El Kahir was elected Imperial Potentate. The following year the El Kahir Patrol was the official escort of Imperial Potentate Alderman at the Imperial Council at Louisville, Kentucky. It was at this session, in 1909, that the Iowa Corn Song was introduced to the general public by El Kahir Patrol, unaccompanied by a

band, but sung lustily by the other uniformed bodies of the Iowa Temples as they paraded the streets of Louisville.

The following comprise El Kahir's uniformed units:

El Kahir Patrol	Chanters	Cycle Patrol
El Kahir Band	Color Guard	Clowns
Drum & Bugle Corps	101	Scooter Patrol
Wrecking Crew	Oriental Band	Camels (Sheba & Fatima)

The spirit of the founders is manifested in El Kahir in 1963 — seventy-seven years after the Temple was established in Cedar Rapids. During this period El Kahir has initiated 11,303 members of the Nobility and could count 4,050 Nobles on its membership rolls on December 31, 1962. The most revered, in point of length of membership, is Charles C. St. Clair of Marshalltown, who was initiated with that first Marshalltown class in 1888. Born in Pennsylvania in 1867, Noble St. Clair is not only the oldest living member of El Kahir Temple, but his membership dates back farther than any other Shriner in Iowa.

The early meetings of El Kahir were held in the Masonic Hall, located in the old Union Block on the northwest corner of First Avenue and Second Street, East. Later, the lodge rooms were moved to the O.R.C. Building, and then to the present Masonic Hall. Ceremonials were staged at the C. S. P. S. Hall, Auditorium, Greene's Opera

House, and Masonic Hall. Many sumptuous banquets were served in the Grand Hotel. In 1928 El Kahir Temple moved into its newly-built mosque in which all meetings and ceremonials were held until the withering blight of the Depression of the 1930's forced the Nobility to give up this magnificent edifice in 1939. Since that time most activities of El Kahir are carried on at the Embassy Club with its Recorder's Office, lavish dining room, and all-purpose third floor party quarters. Thus, when the 26th Annual Business Meeting of the Central States Shrine Association met in Cedar Rapids the Embassy Club was the scene of luncheons, dinners and social functions given the dignitaries from twenty-three Temples.

Ceremonials are held in the Memorial Coliseum, but the registration and indoctrination of candidates and the First and Third Sections of the initiations are held on the third floor of the Embassy Club. The Shrine Circuses and Annual Horse Shows sponsored by El Kahir have been outstanding; funds from the former are generally used for the Crippled Children's Fund, while the latter contributes largely to the development of the Uniformed Units.

A key to the success of El Kahir over the years is the leadership given the Temple by its Illustrious Potentates and their Divans. The Potentates between 1886 and 1963 whose names are inscribed on the Obelisk of Fame are:

Potentates of El Kahir Temple

1886-95	*Cyrus W. Eaton	1934	Robert W. Black
1896	*George W. Bever	1935	*R. L. Savage
1897	*Austin D. Brown	1936	Thomas F. Suchomel
1898-99	*Edwin I. Alderman	1937	*Otto A. Ambroz
1900	*Frank O. Evans	1938	Alvin A. Kannewurf
1901	*B. M. Cleveland	1939	*Edwin D. Monilaw
1902	*William N. Dearborn	1940	E. J. Petranek
1903	*Collins P. Emerson	1941	Henry E. Haegg
1904	*M. S. Jackson	1942	G. King Thompson
1905	*C. O. Johnson	1943	James H. Smith
1906-*7	*W. G. Haskell	1944	Ray C. Coutts
1909-09	*James A. Plumb	1945	Mark D. McWilliams
1910-11	*E. Olin Soule	1946	*William M. Wiley
1912	*S. S. Brotherton	1947	Edward C. Rudin
1913-14	*T. F. Tobin	1948	Glenn E. Norton
1915	*George Yuill	1949	Floyd Philbrick
1916-17	Malcolm M. Thompson	1950	Levert L. Dolson
1918-19	*Kent C. Ferman	1951	O. Lee Eckert
1920	*David Turner	1952	*George H. Cockburn
1921	*M. W. Houser	1953	Edwin E. Hruska
1922	*C. L. Van Valkenburg	1954	Clyde G. Landis
1923	*C. B. Whelpley	1955	Stewart E. Shank
1924	*Steve W. Wilder	1956	Richard H. Veldhouse
1925	*Frank H. Keyser	1957	Ernest H. Gundling
1926-27	Charles C. Kuning	1958	C. Russell Davis
1928	*James E. Blake	1959	H. J. Bronson
1929	Malcolm M. Thompson	1960	Ralph F. Whitlock
1930	*E. N. Helm	1961	Edwin F. Klouda
1931	*Arthur E. Chase	1962	James E. Kelty
1932-33	*Paul Newton Clark	1963	Glen W. Brehm

(*Deceased)

On May 25, 1963, El Kahir initiated almost one hundred Sons of the Desert at its Spring Ceremonial, clearly evincing that the spirit of the pioneer founders still burns brightly in the hearts of present-day members of the El Kahir Nobility.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN