

Kaaba Temple

The Nobility of Kaaba can look back with pride as they observe the 85th Anniversary of the founding of their Shrine Temple at Davenport in 1878. Not only is Kaaba the first Temple in Iowa but it was the first Temple established west of Ohio and the tenth established in the United States. Such famous temples as Moslem in Detroit, Aleppo in Boston, Medinah in Chicago, and Lu Lu in Philadelphia, must bow to Kaaba at National Ceremonials whenever the question of seniority in rank arises.

The story of Kaaba begins in February, 1877, just five years after the founding of the first Shrine Temple in the world — historic Mecca in New York City. It appears that Frank W. Angel, a Davenport businessman, had visited with his friend, William J. Florence, one of the founders of the Shrine in New York City, and while there had been inducted into the mysteries of the Nobility and given a dispensation to form a Shrine Temple in Iowa.

Delighted with the colorful ritual, Angel returned to Davenport and promptly contacted several Scottish and York Rite Masons about the formation of a Shrine Temple in Iowa with its

center in bustling Davenport. All were delighted and the first formal meeting was held in the hall of Trinity Lodge No. 208, A.F.&A.M., on July 9, 1878. The officers elected at this meeting were:

Frank W. Angel	Illustrious Potentate
Samuel A. Fisher	Chief Rabban
Jarvis White	Assistant Rabban
Daniel B. Shelley	High Priest and Prophet
William G. Jones	Oriental Guide
Frank S. Hastings	Treasurer
Cornelius J. Brown	Recorder

Who were these illustrious founders of historic Kaaba Temple? A few vignettes must suffice.

Frank W. Angel was born in Geneseo, New York, in 1840, and had been "fitted" for Yale College when President Buchanan appointed his father Minister to Sweden. Frank went to Europe with his father where he forsook college work for extensive travel in the principal countries — Sweden, Germany, England, and France. He spent nine months in the gay city of Paris. Returning to the United States in 1860, young Frank engaged in various activities, including the study of law under his uncle — Judge Flint, in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. He settled in Davenport in 1865 and was admitted to the bar. He held a clerkship in the firm of McNear & Jordan until 1874 when he joined the staff of Des Saint & Nutting, general hardware dealers, both wholesale and retail. Frank Angel became a member of this firm early

William G. Jones was a candy manufacturer; and in 1878, the same year he established the first Shrine Temple in Iowa. He probably was on a buying trip when he visited New York City in 1877.

The three men comprising the firm of Hastings, White, and Fisher, photographers and dealers in chromos and engravings, were all elected to Pyramid Temple's first Divan. Daniel B. Shelley was a notary public, conveyancer, and accountant; Cornelius J. Brown was a clerk at the Rock Island Arsenal.

The second meeting of Pyramid Temple was held on July 31, 1878, and produced five more members. They were: Fred A. Balch, of the firm of Balch, Frazer & Co., coal dealers; John N. Davis, a machinist; George R. Marvin, owner of the Davenport Shirt Factory and steam laundry; Thomas Murray, city engineer, and Fred M. Melchert, dealer in agricultural implements. Of the latter the *History of Scott County* (1882) records: "Mr. Melchert is a member of the Masonic, K[nights] T[emplar], Nobles of Domestic[!] Shrine. He is vice-president of the Board of Trade, also of the Board of Produce. He is a director of the Davenport Plow Company."

The names of these five Nobles, and the seven officers listed above, are inscribed on the charter issued to Pyramid Temple on February 5, 1878, which hangs in the Recorder's office in Davenport.

They represent substantial, highly-regarded citizens of the Davenport community, men who had risen to the top rank in Masonry, men who were not averse to becoming associated with a new club that would promise wholesome fun and good fellowship. They, and the thousands of Masons who have "crossed the hot sands of the desert" since the founding of Pyramid Temple, have not been disappointed in their quest.

Success did not immediately crown the creation of the first Temple of the Ancient Arabic Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine at Davenport. At the close of 1882 Pyramid Temple could count only 25 members! During the next three years no meetings were held, and no explanation given in the Minute Books. Activities were resumed on May 8, 1886, when initiation fees were raised from \$10 to \$20, an unwise act apparently, for they were lowered to \$15 on November 18, 1886. At this same meeting, the long reign of Frank W. Angel came to a close with the election of Lewis P. Dosh as Potentate — 1887-1889. On January 13, 1887, eight candidates were hailed as the "biggest class yet." The following month, nine candidates were initiated. Pyramid Temple at last appeared to be on the move.

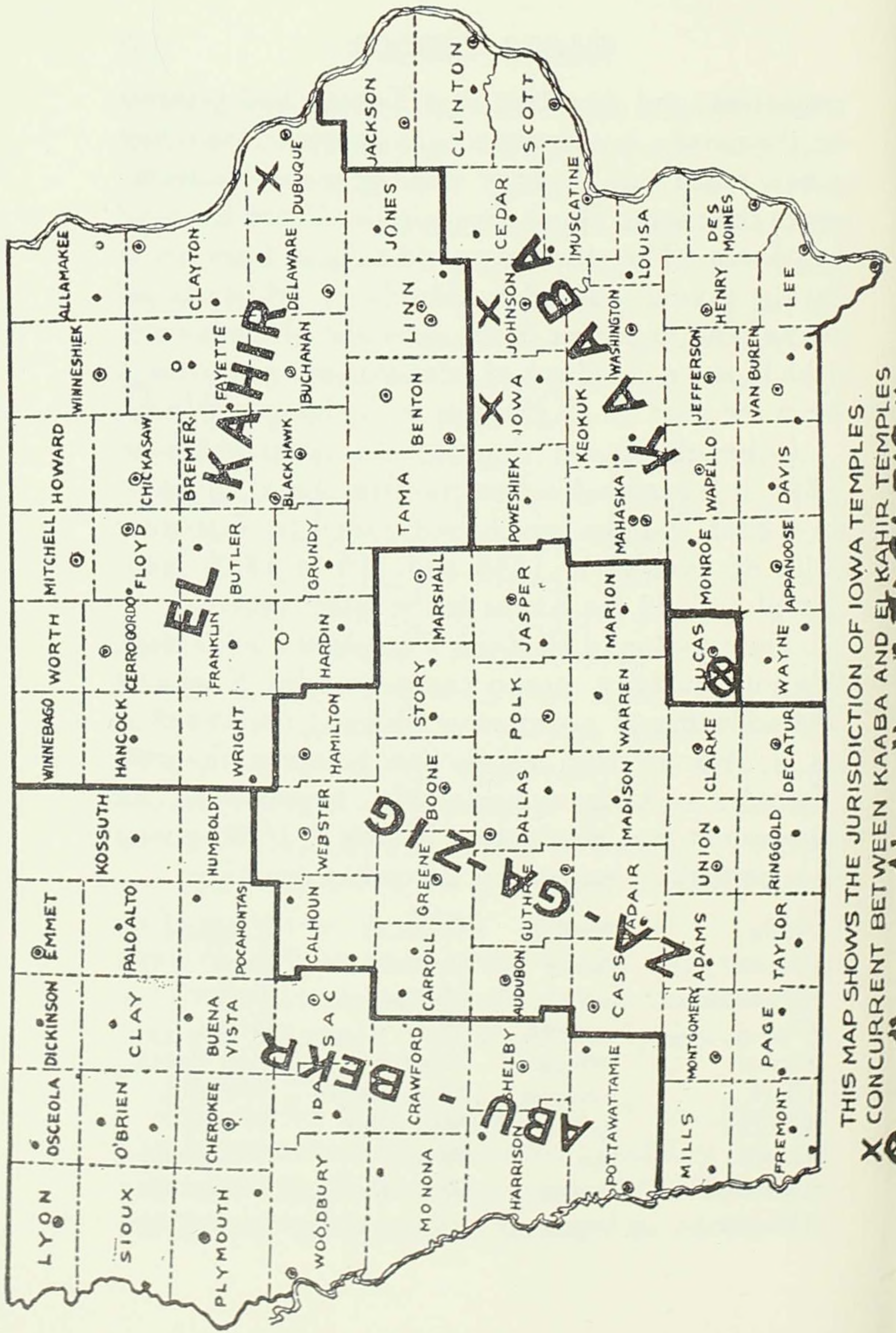
Two weeks later, on January 27, the Imperial Council informed the Davenport Nobility that the name "Pyramid" had been granted the Temple at Bridgeport, Connecticut, through an earlier dis-

pensation, and therefore that Temple had priority on the name. A committee was appointed to select a new name and "Kaaba" was chosen to commemorate the sacred Black Stone in the Great Mosque at Mecca. The stone was said to have been given by the Angel Gabriel to Abraham. Moslems always bend in prayer in the direction of the Kaaba, which, since the days of Mohammed, has always been the goal for all Hegiras in the Islamic World.

Although Kaaba doubled its membership in 1887, it lagged behind newly-established El Kahir in Cedar Rapids, which had ended its first year with 45 Nobles in 1886 and 116 in 1887, compared with 54 for Kaaba in the latter year.

The creation of El Kahir Temple at Cedar Rapids introduced a strong competitor for Kaaba in the soliciting of prospective Shriners and resulted in a dispute over jurisdiction between the two Temples. After considerable negotiation, an agreement was reached on March 5, 1889, giving Kaaba jurisdiction in the following counties:

Adair	Fremont	Madison	Ringgold
Adams	Henry	Mahaska	Scott
Appanoose	Iowa	Marion	Taylor
Cass	*Jackson	Mills	Union
*Cedar	Jefferson	Monroe	Van Buren
Clark	Johnson	Montgomery	Wapello
*Clinton	Keokuk	Muscatine	Warren
Davis	Lee	Page	Washington
Des Moines	Louisa	Poweshiek	Wayne
Decatur	Lucas	*Indicates concurrent jurisdiction.	



THIS MAP SHOWS THE JURISDICTION OF IOWA TEMPLES.
 X CONCURRENT BETWEEN KAABA AND EL KAHIR TEMPLES
 X WITH CIRCLE CONCURRENT BETWEEN KAABA AND "ZAGAZIG"

This agreement was later changed by the Imperial Council making the entire State of Iowa open territory between the two Temples.

A new era dawned when Kaaba, noting the success of El Kahir Temple, began its own series of Hegiras to various Iowa towns. The first of these, to Oskaloosa on January 7, 1891, netted forty-three "wild Arabs" who had been eagerly awaiting an escort across the hot sands to Mecca.

After the Initiation Ceremonies at Oskaloosa, an evening of fellowship including a banquet by Freelands Restaurant was enjoyed by everyone. The banquet was an elaborate affair with a menu of: Blue Points on the Half Shell, Oyster Stew, Celery in Branches, Olives, Chow Chow, Fillet of Young White Fish in Wine Sauce, Antelope with Jelly, Quail on Toast, French Peas, Cold Young Turkey with Cranberry Sauce, Cold Tongue, Cold Mahaska Ham, Roman Ice, Chicken Salad, Shrimp Salad, Saratoga Chips, Vanilla Ice Cream, Pineapple Ice, Assorted Cake, Tangerine Oranges, Bananas, Malaga Grapes, Cheese, Crackers, Salted Almonds, Fresh Rolls, and Coffee.

Encouraged by the success of their pilgrimage to Oskaloosa, the Nobility of Kaaba made the long trek to southwestern Iowa where forty-four neophytes attained the sublime degree at Red Oak in the fall of 1891. Two special trains were needed to carry enthusiastic members of Kaaba to Ot-

tumwa on December 29, 1891, where seventy neophytes awaited admission to the Nobility. As a result of these activities, membership increased from 106 to 342 by the close of 1891.

Following their warm reception in Oskaloosa, Red Oak, and Ottumwa, the Nobility of Kaaba sought "wild sons of the desert" at Burlington, Atlantic, Centerville, and Maquoketa, before returning to Ottumwa in the spring of 1893. On April 13 of that year, the editor of *The Sun* in Ottumwa wrote:

The Shriners were here in force last Friday — over 200 of them, from all parts of the State and they enjoyed themselves.

They had a right royal procession and the presence of so many of them with the red fez on the head, made the streets look quite oriental. Schwabkey's band furnished the excellent music. There was a banquet at night and the toasts responded to were as follows.

Zem Zem — R. L. Tilton

Touching points in the Nobility — J. W. Geiger

The Shriner's smile — G. M. Titus

Poem — H. T. Bowers

The Modern Arab — J. W. Eel

Local Shriners performed their whole duty in extending hospitality to the brethren. Among these were Messrs. W. C. Wyman, J. B. McCarrol, Arthur Gephart, E. M. B. Scott, Geo. Withall, James H. Coes, R. L. Tilton, Chas. Bachman and Dr. C. G. Lewis. Among the recent accessions to the degree in this city were Dr. Philpott, W. H. H. Asbury, H. C. Peters and C. C. Ayres.

The date of ceremonial, place, number of candi-

dates, and total membership at the close of each year to 1900 is shown in the following:

DATE	TOWN	CANDIDATES	MEMBERSHIP
1-7-1891	Oskaloosa	43	
10-26-1891	Red Oak	44	
12-29-1891	Ottumwa	70	342
4-20-1892	Burlington	76	
9-16-1892	Atlantic	46	
11-28-1892	Centerville	34	566
3-28-1893	Maquoketa	12	
4-7-1893	Ottumwa	38	618
6-6-1894	Burlington	39	
12-7-1894	Atlantic	52	720
5-21-1895	Keokuk	44	
5-22-1895	Fort Madison	33	
12-12-1895	Newton	27	824
3-19-1896	Oskaloosa	41	
4-7-1896	Sioux City	61	1,098
10-7-1897	Oskaloosa	17	
12-29-1897	Fort Madison	27	1,080
10-27-1898	Burlington	24	1,112
12-1-1899	Centerville	21	1,143

The growth of Kaaba Temple was truly spectacular during the Gay Nineties. This same growth could be noted throughout the Nation which had witnessed the chartering of thirty-two Temples, bringing the total to seventy-nine on June 15, 1899. As the Twentieth Century dawned, the following new Temples were chartered:

NO.	NAME	LOCATION	DATE
80	Kalurah	Binghamton, N. Y.	May 23, 1900
81	Karnak	Montreal, Que.	May 23, 1900
82	Za-Ga-Zig	Des Moines, Iowa	May 23, 1900
83	Aloha	Honolulu, T. H.	June 12, 1901

The chartering of a third Temple in Iowa did not arrest the growth nor dampen the enthusiasm of Kaaba even though it meant the loss of half the counties heretofore allotted to it through agreement with El Kahir. Members of the Nobility simply redoubled their efforts to improve the ritualistic work and enlist the participation of more members in the varied activities of a thriving Temple. Ritualistic regalia which had cost \$38.50 in 1879, and \$278.50 ten years later, were destined to rise in price to over \$2,100 for fourteen robes in 1961.

The growth of Kaaba Temple during the first two decades of the Twentieth Century can be attributed to two things — the nurturing of informal Shrine Clubs and the development of uniformed units. In 1903 the membership stood at 1,344; twenty years later it reached an all time high of 5,344, a net gain of 4,000. Meanwhile, Kaaba continued to revisit such towns as Ottumwa, Oskaloosa, and Fort Madison, while adding Clinton and Iowa City to its list in 1902 and Leon in 1904. The problem of jurisdiction sprang up occasionally with El Kahir and Za-Ga-Zig, as well as with Mohammed Temple of Peoria. In the latter

case the question was over who should have jurisdiction over Rock Island and Moline, with Mohammed waiving its rights to candidates within the corporate limits of the above named towns on condition Kaaba advise prospective candidates living outside those cities that they must join an Illinois Temple. In 1907 Mohammed Temple revoked this blanket waiver but two months later reconsidered its action and once more granted it.

Members of Kaaba had been thrilled by the colorful uniformed marching units representing different Temples at National Conventions. Soon members of the Kaaba Nobility were clamoring for similar units in Davenport. Later, as Shrine Clubs were created in Kaaba territory, they too sought to develop their own units for the entertainment of members and friends.

One of the best evidences of continued healthy growth is the number of Nobles identified with the uniformed bodies that are always a source of joy to every Temple. On May 14, 1908, the first mention is made of the Arab Patrol. Three years later, in January, 1911, the Potentate authorized the Nobility to hold dances and other activities in order to raise money to send the Arab Patrol to the Imperial Session in Rochester, New York, home of the second Temple. A special train carried the Nobility from Kaaba, El Kahir, El Riad, Za-Ga-Zig, and Abu-Bekr to Rochester where Kaaba's Arab Patrol performed beautifully.

Flushed with success, the Arab Patrol made its second pilgrimage to Los Angeles in 1912. Two years later, in 1914, the Band was organized and it, with the Arab Patrol and color bearers, was sent to the Imperial Session in Atlanta. These trips, of necessity, were expensive but a limit of thirty-two men was placed on the number of members of the uniformed ranks that could participate.

Despite its many Hegiras the Nobility of Kaaba Temple could point with pride to a steadily-growing treasury that was frequently used for more altruistic purposes than mere personal fun. In 1903 the Assets of Kaaba were placed at \$9,320.-99; in 1908 initiation fee was set at \$50; in 1915 an endowment of \$1,000 was contributed to the Masonic Room at St. Luke's Hospital; in the latter year the Potentate and Recorder were authorized to purchase the Trinity Church building at 7th and Brady with \$17,000 from the Life Membership Fund.

When the new Masonic Temple Association was formed to acquire a site and proceed with the construction of a building, the Trustees of Kaaba Temple were authorized to sell to the Association the 7th and Brady Streets property for \$22,500. Thus was begun a project which resulted in a new building, opened in 1923, housing all nineteen Masonic affiliated organizations regularly using the facilities of this beautiful building — Blue Lodge, York and Scottish Rite, Eastern Star and

Daughters of the Nile, DeMolay and Rainbow, to mention a few. This is the only instance in Iowa, and it is believed to be the only instance in the United States, where such a happy situation prevails. And no small satisfaction is felt among the Nobility of Kaaba that they played a significant role through the investment of over \$200,000, in achieving this goal.

The "Great Depression" of the 1930's cast its withering spell on Kaaba Temple as well as on many other activities — economic, religious, social. Many Ceremonials were held with as few as two or three candidates. At the same time, hundreds of Nobles, because of depleted finances, were forced to drop their membership in all organizations. But courage, optimism, and hard work proved effective antidotes to the economic crisis and soon Kaaba was once more forging ahead.

The fun-loving Nobility of Kaaba can be identified with many other worthy causes — local, state, and National. When the Imperial Session at Portland adopted a resolution in June, 1920, that laid the foundation for a system of Crippled Children's Hospitals throughout the Nation, Kaaba was ready and eager to participate. Few Temples can equal, and perhaps none surpass, the united front presented by Kaaba in this worthy program whose charitable qualities have electrified the Nation.

Thus, the year 1937 witnessed the beginning of

a long and happy association between Kaaba Temple and the Royal American Shows, the world's largest carnival. The sponsorship of this great organization has brought much favorable publicity and goodwill to Kaaba Temple, the City of Davenport, and the State of Iowa — all over the United States and Canada. The appearance of Kaaba's Uniformed Units in Imperial Council and regional parades in the Midwest has largely been the result of profits from this sponsorship.

During the 1947 performances of the Royal American Shows in Davenport, Kaaba's Potentate secured a special dispensation from the Imperial Potentate to form the Royal American Shrine Club. It is the only traveling Shrine Club in the world and is the envy of every Temple in Shrine-dom. The active membership of the Club is composed of Shriners who are connected with and travel with the Royal American Shows. Hundreds of Shriners from nearly every Temple in the world are now dues-paying members of the Club. During the short period of fifteen years, the Royal American Shrine Club has contributed nearly \$100,000 to the Shriners Hospitals for Crippled Children, and for parties held for the little patients in children's hospitals located in cities where the Shows play.

It was no easy thing for many of those early Shriners to loyally attend a Spring and Fall Ceremonial. William H. Yakish, station agent and

telegraph operator at the Rock Island Railroad station in Lone Tree, was initiated into Kaaba on November 24, 1908. In order to get to the Ceremonials in Davenport, Yakish would have the section foreman take him on a pump car to Nichols, where he boarded the Rock Island for West Liberty, arriving in time to catch the 4:00 p.m. train that was due in Davenport at 5:00.

After the Ceremonial, Yakish returned on the westbound midnight train to West Liberty where he slept at the Globe Hotel until 4:00 a.m. when he boarded the 4:30 train for Nichols. He then walked home to Lone Tree, a distance of seven miles. If the roads were muddy, Yakish would use the railroad track which was usually full of weeds and wet with the morning dew. Sometimes a skunk impeded his progress by refusing to move, and Yakish had to circle around it. But neither rain nor snow, mud nor ice, nor stubborn skunk, could deter Noble Yakish, who usually arrived home about 7:00 a.m. and, after a hearty breakfast, would be back at work at 8:00 a.m. Looking back over the years, Yakish recalled in 1963 that attending the Ceremonial was well worth the effort. His treasured annual membership cards (he had saved all but two since he received his first in 1908) continue to stimulate his happy memories.

The strength of Kaaba today can be found in its Shrine Clubs. In addition to concurrent jurisdiction over Dubuque and Iowa City these clubs are:

SHRINE CLUB	CHARTERED	SHRINE CLUB	CHARTERED
Louisa County	1942	Fort Madison	1956
Muscatine	1942	Keokuk Fez Club	1956
Ottumwa	1943	Southeastern Iowa (Burlington)	1956
Clinton	1944	Cedar County (Tipton)	1957
Oskaloosa	1947	Centerville	1957
Royal American	1947	Buffalo Bill (Scott County)	1958
Washington	1948	Fairfield	1959

Shrine Clubs contribute more than dues to a Temple; they frequently are responsible for Uniformed Units, as the following list of Kaaba Temple illustrates:

UNIFORMED UNITS	ORGANIZED	UNIFORMED UNITS	ORGANIZED
Patrol	1908	Clowns (Ottumwa)	1960
Band	1914	Firemen (Oskaloosa)	1962
Directors Staff	1923	Cycle Patrol (Ottumwa)	1963
Chanters	1958	Provost Guard	1963

As Illustrious Potentate Earl Ackerman and his hard working Divan look back over the eighty-five years that have elapsed since Pyramid Temple was chartered, they can rejoice in the tremendous growth of Kaaba in the past and can look forward with confidence to its continued growth in the future. In their wildest dreams the founding fathers of present-day Kaaba could scarcely envision a Temple that was destined to initiate 13,923 candidates in 248 Ceremonials; a Temple whose unselfish labors for the poor and the handicapped has won for it the plaudits of Americans everywhere.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN