

AS WE contemplate the world's largest and most beautiful Masonic Temple which Detroiters boast about we are reminded that the Craft did not always possess such a superb edifice. It would therefore perhaps be well for the reader to allow to pass before his mind's eye the many meeting places which have served as Detroit Masonry's Temple.

During the first fifty-seven years of Masonic history in Michigan, the early Lodges working first, under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of England through the Provincial Grand Lodge of New York, secondly, under the Grand Lodge of Canada, and thirdly under the Sovereign Grand Lodge of New York, met in such places as were then available to the Craft. We can visualize this first lodge of 1764 (brought into being by the 60th Colonial regiment, just five years after the occupation of Detroit by the

From Block House in 1764 to . . .

World's Largest Masonic Temple

The Story of Masonry's Meeting Places in Detroit

By J. Fairbairn Smith, 33°, P.G.H.P., F.P.S.
Editor of Masonic World

British) meeting in the old block house, the room poorly lighted by the yellow sunshine which struggled to seep in through the small windows. There were no luxuriously upholstered seats and richly carpeted floors, no mural decorations nor expensive organ. Our pioneer brethren improvised such crude scant furniture as was necessary for the functioning of the Lodge.

Old Detroit Masonic Temples

During the early part of the nineteenth century Masonry met in the Old Council House on the



A Century of Meeting Places

southwest corner of Randolph and Jefferson Avenues. It was from this building on Monday, September 23, 1823 that the assembled members of the Grand Lodge of Michigan met to elect a Grand Master. On December 20, 1881 to May 10, 1882, the Grand Lodge met in the Hilsendegen Hall, room 16, Nos. 52-69 Monroe Avenue, southwest corner of Randolph Street. From May 8, 1882 to April 24, 1883, the Grand Lodge met in Kermott's Hall, 208 Woodward Avenue, northeast of Wilcox Avenue.

From 1842 to 1852 meetings were held in the upper story of the old Newberry building on Jefferson Avenue. In January 1851, Henry T. Backus was elected Grand Master and during his three year term he consistently urged Grand Lodge to secure a building. However a committee reporting on his recommendation said: "A building that would do credit to the Order would cost at least \$20,000, and without a great increase in per capita dues, the scheme was impractical." So the matter was dropped.

First Masonic Structure

In spite of Grand Lodge's pessimism the members of Monroe Chapter, No. 1, R.A.M., which had been organized under the jurisdiction of the General Grand Chapter in 1818, proceeded to incorporate and to construct a new Masonic Temple. The cornerstone was laid September 2, 1851 and the building was completed and occupied in 1852 at a cost of \$25,000 and was dedicated June 24, 1857. This Hall was erected at Nos. 131-135 Jefferson Avenue, on the north side between Griswold and Shelby Streets. It remained occupied as a Masonic Temple by the Detroit Masonic Bodies until December 20, 1881.

During the fifteen years from 1881 until 1896, when the Temple on Lafayette Avenue was ready for occupancy, the following buildings were tenanted by one or more of the Detroit Masonic Bodies. From April 22, 1883 to March 8, 1880, New Hall, Hodges Block Nos. 174-178 Griswold Street, southwest corner of State. From March 8, 1880 to

From January 16, 1884 to March 21, 1887, New Hall, Nos. 263-265 Michigan Avenue, south side between Fourth and Fifth Streets, Rowe's Block. From February 10, 1887 to November 6, 1894, Scottish Rite Cathedral, 99 Lafayette Avenue (old Lafayette Avenue Baptist Church) south side between Cass and First Streets. From November 6, 1894 to May 23, 1896, Philharmonic Hall, 42 Lafayette Avenue (old Unitarian Church) northwest corner of Shelby Street.

Organize Temple Association

In January of 1891 leaders of the various lodges, chapters, councils, commanderies, and the coordinate Scottish Rite bodies created a joint committee to make plans for the erection of a Masonic Temple which would do justice to Masonry's greatness. On March 18, 1892 representative of Union, Detroit, Union, Ashbur, Oriental, Schiller, and Kilwinning Lodges, Monroe and P. S. Chapters, Monroe Council, Detroit and Damascus Commanderies, and the Scottish Rite Bodies held the first recorded meeting as a coordinated association. Moslem Temple at a late date also joined the associated bodies. On March 27, the Scottish Rite Bodies turned over 75 ft. between Cass Avenue and First Street on Lafayette Blvd. as its contribution to the ground needed for a temple of spacious proportions. To this was added an additional 75 feet, giving a total frontage of 150 feet on Lafayette Blvd. and a depth of 135 feet on First Street. Thus the seeds were sown for the creation of a Masonic Temple Association for Detroit.

Legislature Allows Incorporation

A committee was then appointed to wait upon the state legislature to secure an enabling act to incorporate fraternal organizations, and on March 19, 1894 the Masonic Temple Association of Detroit was formally incorporated. In designing the Temple on Lafayette Blvd. and First Street the representatives, then members of the Association, planned a structure which they felt would care for the needs of Detroit Masonry for the next half century.

Outgrow Temple in 12 Years

On May 25, 1896 the Lafayette Temple was dedicated. It had been built during the panic years (Continued on Page 9)

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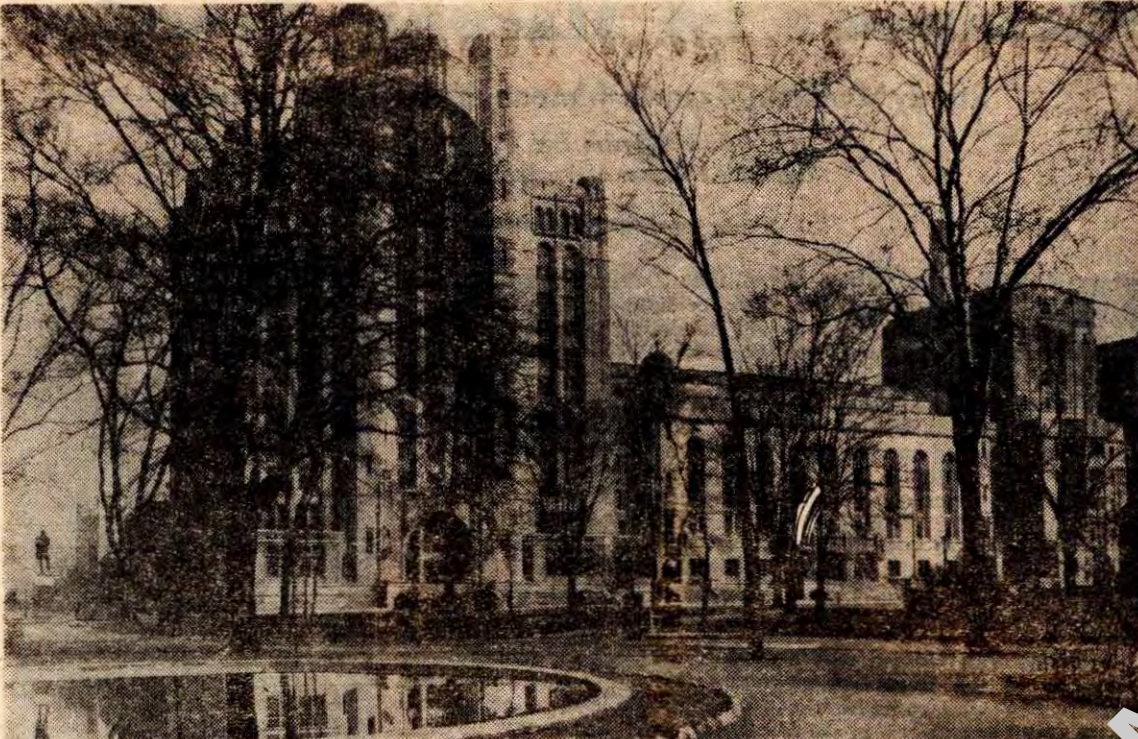
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TEMPLE

(Continued from Page 8)

World's Largest Masonic Temple



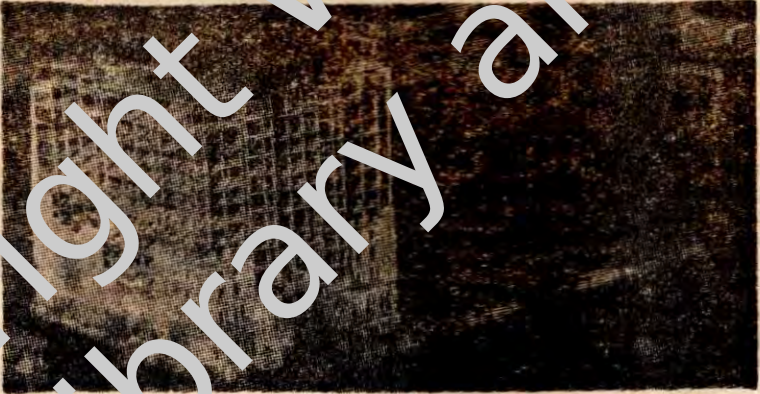
Detroit's Masonic Temple has been termed a "Symphony in Stone"—Largest and most beautiful of them all.

Clark W. MacKenzie Lays Cornerstone



Square, level and plumb was the report received by Grand Master Clark W. MacKenzie (now Grand Treasurer) as he laid the cornerstone of the temple on September 18, 1922. United States President Warren G. Harding had a special train to perform the ceremony and due to illness he sent Detroit's own Edwin S. Gurnea, Secretary of the Navy, who wore the blue sash of the immortal George Washington while presiding as Master of the Lodge and at the laying of the Cornerstone of the National Capitol in Washington, D. C. D. also used the trowel which Washington used to spread the cement on the occasion of laying the cornerstone of the Capitol. Also used at the ceremony was the Holy Bible, that great light in Masonry, on which Washington took his oath as the nation's first President and which rested on the altar of Washington's Lodge while he served as Master; the square and plumb and other Masonic implements used by him were placed at the occasion.

Steel Columns Rise 207 Feet into Air



Eight thousand tons of steel fabricated during the winter of 1921-22 began to climb in orderly fashion some 207 feet into air. The rattle of pneumatic hammers destroyed the quiet of Cass Park for months and even in its skeletal form the building gave promise of that combination of beauty and strength which was to make it the wonder among Masonic Temples.

Three major divisions, the ritualistic tower, the auditorium, and the Shrine Club. Provisions for

Of Gothic Architecture

Precedent for fraternal buildings are all in Greek or Egyptian. Nothing of the sort had yet been accomplished in Gothic. The architect nevertheless felt that the Gothic style best expressed the traditions of Masonry. The Masonic student should not forget that Operative Masonry, having its origin in the guilds, left behind it the tradition of the great Gothic cathedrals of which its members were the builders, and certainly the spirit and tradition of the Knights Templar and the historic setting of the Scottish Rite are Gothic.

The ritualistic building, or fourteen story tower, provides a home for 34 Symbolic Lodges, five Royal Arch Chapters, a Cryptic Rite Council, two Knight Templar Commanderies, and the four coordinated Scottish Rite Bodies. The tower is 210 feet high and dominates the

istic tower, it would perhaps be natural to take the elevator and proceed to the top floor and then journey downwards. The two top floors are now occupied by the radio and television studios of stations WJBK, WJBK-FM, and WJBK-TV. The floor below has space for additional lodge facilities should the occasion require.

Seven lodge rooms are now complete and all have different decoration treatment, the motifs of decoration having been taken from the Egyptian, Greek, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, Tudor, Romanesque, and the Greek Ionic.

These rooms are all true to period and the art work throughout the building, especially the beautifully decorated ceilings, was done under the personal direction of famous Italian artists.

Knight Templar Quarters

Stopping on the second floor of the tower we find the quarters of the Commandery, consisting of the beautiful parlor treated in the Tudor period with its walls of high oak paneling and the two figures in armor creating an atmosphere suggesting the period when knightly chivalry was in vogue. The work room of the Commandery (known in the parlance of Templarism as the Asylum) adjoins the parlor. This room is truly a gem in stone and wood with a touch of the cathedral suggested by its Gothic architecture and stained glass windows, placed as a memorial to those who gave much of their

(See TEMPLE, Page 19)

of 1893-95 when bankruptcies and soup kitchens were more in vogue than the building of huge temples. Masonry had, however, been through too many similar crises to be thus disheartened. Notwithstanding the careful and wise planning the Order outgrew the Lafayette Blvd. Temple in twelve years, and in 1908 it was crowded to capacity. To provide for an addition the Association bought an additional 66 feet and architects were engaged to devise means of appropriately adding to the structure. These plans never reached consummation for it was deemed that at best it would simply be a make-shift.

A move was started in 1913 to purchase a new location and a thorough survey involving many choice sites in Detroit was instituted. The committee in charge finally recommended that the Association purchase 400 ft. of property fronting on Baggs Street, now Temple Avenue, running in an easterly direction from the northeast corner of Second Blvd. and George D. Mason & Co. was commissioned to draw plans for a new temple. During March of 1920 the entire membership in the Detroit area started a campaign to secure subscriptions to finance the undertaking which had been inaugurated.

Turn Sod in 1920

It was on Thanksgiving Day of 1920 that the first sod was turned and a vast host stood in Cass Park for the occasion, and flowed in human currents up and down Second Blvd. and the newly named Temple Ave. Certain it is, no Mason of the period will ever forget the occasion.

The working tools of America's first President, Masonry's own revered George Washington, were brought from Alexandria, Virginia and employed in the spreading of the first mortar; thus the same trowel which the father of our country used in laying the cornerstone of the national capitol was again placed in use September 18, 1922 in laying the cornerstone of Detroit's great new Masonic Temple. The ceremony was witnessed by virtually every Masonic family in the metropolitan area.

Dedicate Edifice in 1926

On Thanksgiving Day of 1926 the final ceremony of Masonry's most ambitious program took place when thousands again gathered for the formal dedication of the Temple, and the consecration of its various rooms by the Grand Lodge of Michigan to the work of the Craft.

This also was the signal for the opening of the public portion of the building as a civic center, and for the use of the community at large.

The Detroit Masonic Temple is unique among the Masonic buildings of the world because all of the various branches are housed in the same structure. There is some twelve million cubic feet of space in all, making it the largest and most complete building of its kind in the world. In all there are 28 units in the building grouped into

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Daniel B. Taylor
Tyler of Stoney Creek

A Light Shone out from Stoney Creek Michigan's 1st Masonic Temple

Sturdy Oakland County Masons Keep Light Burning

By Charles Fey, P. M.
Honorary Member of Rochester Lodge, No. 5

IN THE little village of Stoney Creek, near Rochester, Michigan, occurred the passing June 7, 1952, at the age of 89, a pioneer woman surgeon, Dr. Bertha Van Hoosen, descendant of an early Oakland county family. She was laid to rest in Stoney Creek Cemetery where sleep many pioneers of an earlier generation, many of whom were members of the world famous Stoney Creek Lodge, No. 7, now Rochester No. 5.

Dr. Bertha Van Hoosen was a descendant of the Rev. Lemuel Taylor family who came to the vicinity of Stoney Creek in 1823. Her maternal grandfather was Elisha Taylor. He was a brother of Joshua B., who held several offices in the Grand Lodge of 1841-44, and of Daniel B., the famous Tyler of Stoney Creek Lodge.

A Pioneering Spirit
While taking a literary course

at the University of Michigan she decided to change to a medical education over her mother's objections. Money for her education was cut off and she had to work her way through college, and being endowed with that same indomitable spirit of her ancestors, she became a leading woman surgeon. As an author she wrote "Petticoat Surgeon" for which she was honored by the International Women's Council at Helsinki, Finland.

The Stoney Creek Lodge first met in the new log school house and later in the home of Judge Nathaniel Millerd, a charter member, and son-in-law of Rev. Lemuel Taylor.

All Masons know—or should know—that sombre story of one William Morgan of Batavia, N. Y., who had threatened and did publish his expose of the Masonic work. Morgan disappeared



The first structure to be built exclusively for Masonic purposes in Michigan was erected in the woods on Mt. Moriah by Stoney Creek Lodge No. 5 in 1827. Shortly after the Morgan excitement had blown over.



The cornerstone of the first Masonic Temple in Michigan, built by Stoney Creek Lodge after the Morgan episode. A picture of the Temple appears above. The cornerstone is now a part of a memorial monument erected by the Grand Lodge of Michigan in Stoney Creek Cemetery.

and the Masons were accused of doing away with him. The time was tight so that the incident became a national political issue.

The disappearance was used as an excuse, giving rise to the formation of a political party.

Ban Against Masons

The feeling against the Masonic Order did not reach Michigan until 1829 and in order to keep peace more for political reasons than anything else, Grand Master Lewis Cass ordered all the Michigan Lodges to close. All obeyed the order except plucky little Stoney Creek, which had received its dispensation, January 9, 1828, so will be 125 years old next January.

The petition for a dispensation came before Grand Lodge in June 1827, but as another had been received from some Brethren at Rochester and a lodge already existed at Auburn, Oakland Lodge, No. 3, the committee decided that if Oakland at Auburn would move back to Pontiac then the Brethren at Rochester should be recognized but if Oakland did not move then Stoney Creek should be honored. Oakland, No. 3 did not move so Stoney Creek received the dispensation as one of the last acts of Grand Master Cass before closing the lodges.

In face of the order and the storm of bigotry at its doors the members refused to disband and continued its meetings. At this time the meetings were being held in the home of Judge Nathaniel Millerd, but due to the pressure being heaped upon him by his Church (Baptist) and his family, for the sake of peace he asked the Lodge to remove to another house, which was done, perhaps the tavern of Joshua B. Taylor and then later the tavern of Jesse Decker at

of this Lodge were to defy such a storm, Gould, in his "History of Freemasonry", says of these years:

"This country has seen fierce and bitter political contests; but no other has approached the bitterness of the campaign against the Masons. No society, civil, military or religious escaped its influence. No relation of family or friends was a barrier to it. The hatred of Masonry was carried everywhere, and there was no retreat so sacred that it did not enter. Not only were teachers and pastors driven from their stations, but the children of Masons were excluded from the schools, and members from their churches. The Sacrament was refused to Masons by formal vote of the church, for no other offense than their Masonic connections. Families were divided. Brother was arrayed against brother, father against son, and even wives against their husbands. Desperate efforts were made to take away chartered rights from Masonic Corporations and to pass laws that would prevent Masons from holding their meetings and performing their ceremonies."

The First Baptist Church of Pontiac, in the Spring of 1829 began to be much agitated on the subject of Freemasonry. A committee reported that "we entirely disfellowship the institution of Freemasonry." Vote was afterward reconsidered, and the matter continued until December, when a stronger resolution of condemnation was passed. Several exclusions resulted.

Candle In the Window

In 1862 fire destroyed their Lodge records in Rochester, to which they had moved in 1853, so it is not possible to learn how often they met. How hard it must have been to hold meetings in the face of the storm in the little village where every one knew every one else, but this made no difference to the faithful Tyler, Daniel B. Taylor, who on Lodge nights, as soon as the stage brought the mail, took his newspaper and a candle and repaired to the Lodge Hall. Here he lit the candle and put it in the window. If any other came, a meeting was held. If no one came Brother Taylor waited until closing time; then he would blow out the candle, lock the door and go to his home.

The light which Daniel B. (Continued on Page 11)

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(Continued from Page 10)

Taylor lit of evenings to shine forth a faint gleam for the way-faring Mason has never been quenched.

The Grand Lodge of Michigan came to life in 1841 and Stoney Creek Lodge in 1847 again led the way by constructing the first Masonic Temple in Michigan for purely Masonic purposes on a high hill just to the rear and above the tavern and home of Joshua B. Taylor.

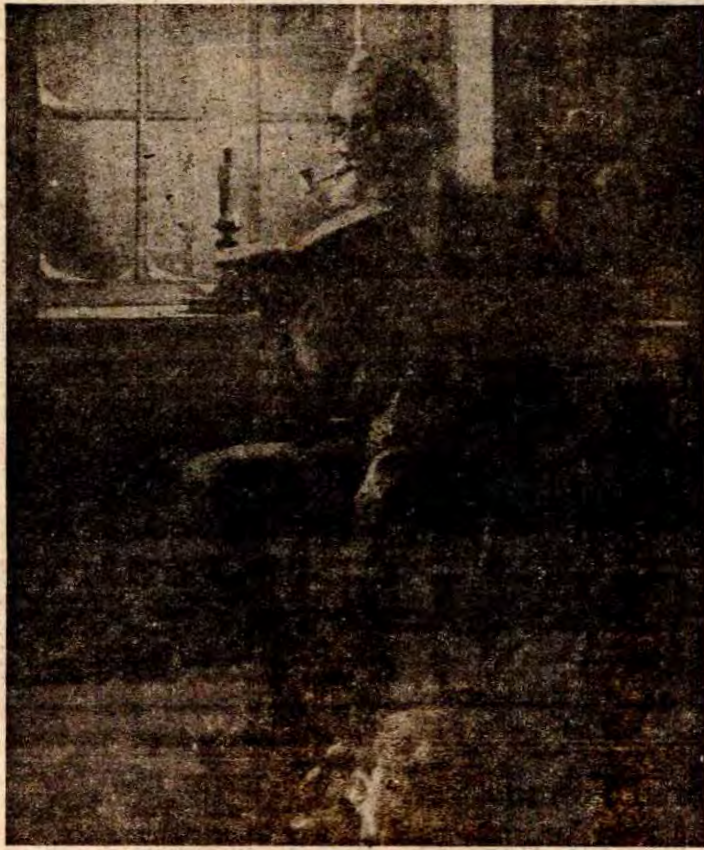
Build on Mt. Moriah

The hill was probably a hundred feet in height and covered with forest trees. This hill the Brethren named Mt. Moriah. When they were ready to lay the cornerstone invitations were sent out to the neighboring Lodges to participate in the exercises connected with the cornerstone laying, June 24, 1847. It was quite an event at which Grand Master E. Smith Lee presided. The program was as follows:

1. Voluntary by the band.
2. Prayer by the Grand Chaplain, Rev. Daniel Michael.
3. Masonic ode, by the choir.
4. Presentation of a P.M. Jewel to the M.W. Ebenezer Hall, P.G.M. of the Grand Lodge, by Paul B. Ring, S.G.W.
5. Music by the band.
6. Ceremony of laying the Corner Stone. G. M. E. Smith Lee.
7. Music by the band.
8. Oration, by R. W. Abner C. Smith, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge.
9. Prayer.
10. Music by the band.
11. Benediction.

It was not until two years later that the Temple was dedicated, July 4, 1849. This was also an important event to Stoney Creek. Invitations were

Michigan's 1st Masonic Temple



This is an artist's conception of Daniel Taylor, Tyler of Stoney Creek Lodge, seated with his book, his dog at his feet and a candle in the window. In all the 150,000 square miles of Michigan Territory, his was the only Masonic light which the blasts of bigotry and passion could not extinguish. All honor is due Daniel Taylor.

sent to all the Lodges in that part of the State. Large delegations were present from Detroit, Mt. Clemens and Pontiac. Grand Master Jeremiah Moors presided at the dedication and Brother Charles W. Willerd, of Stoney Creek Lodge, acted as Grand

Marshal.

The land, Temple and surroundings are described as follows: Standing upon the summit of Mt. Moriah and looking to the East, the little village of Stoney Creek lies below, with the hills and valleys beyond forming a panorama of rare beauty. Right in front and below was the tavern that was kept by Joshua B. Taylor, within whose walls the pioneers of those days gathered to gather and discuss the news of the day. Just beyond was the home of Nathaniel B. Miller, which was the first Lodge room of Stoney Creek Lodge; while almost perpendicularly below flows the little stream from which Stoney Creek took its name.

A Rare Temple

The Temple itself was a modest frame structure, painted red, standing upon a foundation a few feet high. The entrance was through a single door, in a deep stone foundation, and the visitor first found himself in a sort of cellar, from which a narrow stairway led to the Lodge room above.

The Temple was a conspicuous object for miles around the trees in front being below the sides of the bluff, while the dense forest in the rear completely hid it from view from the west and formed a striking background, against which the red painted Temple stood out in bold relief. In such a place and amid such surroundings the sturdy Brethren performed their Masonic work.

It is said that the only approach to the Lodge room from the cellar room was by means of a ladder which they drew up into the room above when Lodge was opened. Just another precaution.

An Unusual Shape

Henry M. Look, Past Grand Lecturer, in one of his writings was octagon in shape. Perhaps this was so and they may have had rooms in the corners for the preparation of the candidates, etc.

The newspapers of that day did not mention the size of the Temple but in talking to one of the older men in Rochester in 1940, he told the writer that as a boy he passed it many times on the way to the mill to have feed ground and to him it seemed that the Temple was about twenty feet square and had a hip roof.

Meetings were held in the Temple until the year 1853, when the Lodge was removed to

Rochester where it has since been located.

The Temple stood for fifteen more years, 1868, when it was torn down, and its material used in the building of a barn. The cornerstone was used for a similar purpose, the barn being located across the road from the Temple site.

Cornerstone Intact

When the present Temple in Detroit was being contemplated an attempt was made to secure the Stoney Creek Lodge cornerstone to incorporate it into that building but the owners would not consent to this as they felt that it should stay forever in the vicinity for which it was hallowed.

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Pursuant to a resolution adopted in Grand Lodge in 1927, (100 years after the petition was sent in for Stoney Creek Lodge dispensation) a committee was appointed to investigate the desirability of erecting a memorial to Stoney Creek Lodge. The committee recommended to Grand Lodge in 1928 that:

"Your Committee has carefully considered the subject of a suitable memorial. It has seemed to us that an elaborate and costly monument would be out of place. They were simple men, those early brothers; they were strong men, and they were not without dignity. Therefore we recommend a memorial which is in keeping with their virtues—a plain bronze tablet bolted to an enduring boulder of granite."

Memorial In Cemetery
It was further recommended that the boulder and tablet be placed either near an ancient building where Stoney Creek Lodge met or in the cemetery where many of the brethren are buried. They further recommended (See 1st TEMPLE, Page 18)

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