

## A Brief History of the Oriental Shriners

**Oriental Temple** had birth pangs extending from February 21, 1877 to February 27, 1877. According to the original minutes book, the first meeting was held on the 21<sup>st</sup> with Noble Jesse B. Anthony 33°, Grand Potentate by virtue of a dispensation dated February 7, 1877, and issued by the Imperia Grand Council of the Ancient Arabic Order of the nobles of the Mystic Shrine. He proceeded to organize Oriental Temple by appointing subordinate officers. Then the Grand Potentate declared Oriental Temple duly organized and in order for the transaction of business. Three days later on February 24<sup>th</sup> a second meeting was held and nine names were proposed for membership and duly accepted.

According to the Imperial Council Directory, Oriental Temple was not constituted until February 27, 1877. Evidently, the numeral 1 in February 21 has been misread for a 7 for a century. In those days, our Temple didn't meet on a regular schedule. The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting was held on December 27, 1878. The next meeting was October 10, 1885, a lapse of 7 years.

In May of 1886 we reported our membership as 171. During the early years, our membership was from a much greater area such as Little Falls, Fort Plain and New Haven, CT.

Evidently, no dues were assessed or paid for the first ten years. A resolution was presented and passed in December 1887 establishing annual dues of \$1 payable in advance. At the same time, under direction of the Imperial Council, the Temple seal was selected. The seal is still in use today.

On July 3, 1903, Oriental Temple instituted **Cairo Temple** of Rutland, VT, and the charter was granted July 9, 1903.

In 1918 two of our members died in service.

Immediately after the war, there was a tremendous influx of Novices. In 1919, 201 were created; in 1920, 384 were created; in 1921, 410 were created; and in 1922, 158 were created. At that time our total membership was 2,793, over six times today's membership.

When the **Springfield Children's Hospital** was opened February 21, 1925, Oriental Temple was there. Our Temple with its Band, Patrol, and a large number of nobles participated in the Hospital's dedication.

Our Golden Anniversary was celebrated at the **Masonic Temple in Troy** with a ceremonial, dinner, dancing and entertainment.

**Oriental's Diamond Jubilee and Ceremonial** was conducted at Lake Placid on May 17, 1952. Guests from nine different Temples attended and a full day's program was presented.

Our Centennial Celebration and Ceremonial were held in Lake Placid at the **Lake Placid Club** on Saturday May 28, 1977. The day was filled with celebrating by the 600 attendees and 75 new candidates. In the year of our 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 100 new Nobles were created.

In 1980, the Temple purchased its first Hospital Van. The vans are used to transport patients to the **Shriners Children's Hospitals** in **Boston, Montreal and Springfield** and are supported by the **Oriental Temple Hospital Fund**. The temple currently operates three vans and continues to transport children and their parents to and from their hospital appointments free of charge.

In 1989, a cornerstone was laid for the new hospital facility in Springfield. **Illustrious Lewis O. Slocum** included mementos in the space allotted for Oriental. The dedication of the new Shriners Children's Hospital took place on September 29, 1991. **III. Robert A. Rabe** and many Nobles and their Ladies also attended.

On November 1, 1992, ground was broken for the expansion and revamping of the Boston Burns Hospital. Potentate Richard Pelham was in attendance along with **Illustrious Charles Pederson PP, III Raymond E. Bailey PP** and future **Potentate William Fagg**. The new expansion was dedicated in 1995, when III. Charles Fake was Potentate.

In 1997, the Shriners observed their 125th Anniversary and the Shriners Hospitals their 75th Anniversary.

In the millennium year 2000, **III. Dan Murray** was Potentate, the New York Ontario Shrine Association fall meeting was held in Saratoga Springs. **III. Craig Cashman PP** served as NYOSA President that year as the association hosted **Imperial Potentate Edward Smith**.

In 2002 **III. Paul D. Marinello** was installed as Potentate. A highlight of his tenure in office was the Cruise to Alaska hosted by III. Sir Paul and his Lady Billie following the Imperial Session in Vancouver, BC.

In 2003, with **III. L. John Garhartt Potentate**, the nobility voted to accept the offer by the Lansingburgh Masonic Temple Association to rent with the option to buy for a two-year period. The Temple Offices were moved from Troy Masonic Temple Association Building to the Lansingburgh facility.

2004 was a landmark year for the Oriental Shiners. **III. Stephen R. Flatt** became the first son of a potentate to become the Potentate of Oriental Temple. His father, **III. James Flatt PP** (1999) presented him with his fez at this installation. The year began with the nobility voting for the purchase of the Lansingburgh Masonic Temple. The closing took place in 2005, when **III. Richard Lebowich** was Potentate.

At the Potentate's Ball in 2005, Oriental Temple and **Potentate III. Richard Lebowich** were honored to host **Imperial Sir Alan M. Madsen** Imperial Captain of the Guard and his Lady Jan.

At the Potentate's Ball in 2006, Oriental Temple and **Potentate III. Byron Moak** had the privilege of hosting the Grand Master of Masons for the State of New York; this year also saw the first positive membership gain in years.

The future of the Temple lies in the hands of the nobility and leadership of the organization. A Shriner Noble serves one year as Potentate of a Shrine Temple. Oriental Shrine's Potentates for the last ten years have been **III. Howard Waller, III. William Fink, III. Gerry McGarvey, III. Thomas Nicolson, III. George Mudd, III. John Garhartt, III. Timothy Grogan, III. Thomas Abraham, III. Robert Harris, and III. James D. Vooy**s, all of whom loyally carried out the functions and responsibilities of this key role. Oriental Shrine Temple's Potentate for 2018 and 2019 is **III. Gaylord L. Hawley**, whose enthusiasm and integrity proudly carries on the Shriners tradition to serve children in need.