

The International Eastern Star Temple

In July, 1919, at the Nineteenth Triennial Assembly of the General Grand Chapter held in Seattle, a resolution was introduced to formulate plans for an International Eastern Star Temple. Later, 1934, the Twenty-first Triennial Assembly held in Tampa, adopted a resolution which provided for the selection of a Temple Committee.

This committee, headed by the Most Worthy Grand Matron, Most Worthy Grand Patron, Right Worthy Grand Trustees and four Most Worthy Grand Matron Appointees, lost no time in selecting and securing the Perry Belmont Mansion in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Belmont, a Master Mason, felt the Order of the Eastern Star would retain the beauty of the mansion so dear to his heart, and was very cooperative in the settlement of the property.

The building was completely inspected and all necessary repairs and alterations were made in order to assure safety and preserve the beauty of the lovely mansion. Today its magnificence is admired by all who visit it. Every member of the Eastern Star who hasn't seen this lovely Temple should never visit Washington, D.C., without going through this spacious landmark.

A continuation of the plan originated in 1919 to ask each member of the Order to contribute \$1.00 until each member has made an investment of that amount and has become a part owner of the Temple is carried on by the Most Worthy Grand Matron.

The site of this building is most outstanding as it has a street or avenue on each of its four sides. It is surrounded by embassies, legations and national headquarters making it possible for many visitors from other countries to see and know that the Star of the East sheds its rays on all mankind.

The entrance or lobby immediately impresses the visitor. Its walls of Gai stone mined in France was brought here at an expense of \$75,000 when the mansion was built. The halls and corridors are lighted with a lantern of bronze and gold finish.

The priceless records, statistics, and history of our Order are stored here with the proper care. Some of the most valuable ones are stored in fireproof vaults. The offices of the Right Worthy Grand Secretary and Right Worthy Grand Treasurer are housed here.

The massive reception hall contains an oil portrait of Robert Morris, the founder of our Order. The lovely marble floor is adorned by an embossed Chinese rug, 18 feet square, with the Star and Emblems beautifully designed. It was made in Peking, China, by the Fette Rug Company whose rugs were of the finest ~~in the~~ ~~world~~ in the world. The value of this rug cannot be estimated since such fine wool and workmanship would be difficult to obtain. It was presented to the General Grand Chapter by four chapters of the Canal Zone.

The library with its exquisite inlaid bookcase, and the Treasure Room with its many fine pieces of hand embroidery and historical collections are most interesting and make a lasting impression.

The ball room with brocade covered walls and hand-carved oak trim, parquetry floor, crystal chandeliers, skylight and ornamental mantel lend much to the magnificence of the architecture. Its rug is of the finest, being a semi-antique Oushak Turkish.

The chapel signifies harmony and reverence. The walls of a rich gray with gold leaf trimmings, glass doors extending from ceiling to floor, ornamental moulding with burnished gold medallions, rich red satin upholstered furniture with drapes to match casts a sacred reflection befitting our wonderful Order. The mellow tones of the carefully selected organ add much to any service held in the chapel. The Persian rug is one of the rare patterns absolutely impossible to duplicate today, and is over 85 years old, selling at one time for \$9,500.

The Chinese Room has been furnished by members of the Eastern Star living in China. Teakwood tables, exquisite tapestries, camphor-wood chest and brass incense burner, Damask drapes of Chinese blue and gold, temple jars, Chinese porcelain and paintings artistically arranged in this lovely room is admired by everyone.

The State Dining Room with its lovely banquet table, 5X18 feet is outstanding. The hand-carved marble door and window casings, marble floor and wainscoting are in keeping with the stately atmosphere of the room and its mantel over 800 years old was brought to this country from an old European Palace.

The Family Dining Room contains many of the former owners' choice furnishings. Among them are the hand-carved table, china cabinet and thirty chairs with velvet cushions, a silver service known as a "Lazy Susan," a flat silver service of 205 pieces and other articles used by the renowned Belmont family. A member of a Chapter in Virginia painted the symbolical mural ceiling. Evidently his brush was guided by an artistic hand for such beauty is rarely found.

Beauty reigns in the Drawing Room as only the finest French hand-painted panels, French cabinets and furniture and gold brocade hangings are found.

In the Honor Roll Room large cabinets contain the name of each Grand Chapter and the name and number of each Chapter contributing an amount equal to one dollar per member. The International Eastern Star Temple is your Temple. The dollars contributed will go into a fund to maintain and assure each member that this Temple shall fulfill the purpose for which it was dedicated. From a mansion to a hallowed Temple is symbolic of the sacred touch the Order of Eastern Star adds to human lives.

Visit your Temple when in Washington, D.C., and enjoy the sturdiness of structure, the eloquence of furnishings, the artistic arrangements and lastly the fraternal atmosphere that dwells therein.

(This article prepared by Mrs. Juanita P. Bush of Washington, D.C. was copied from the Eastern Star Magazine of June 1948)