



Cass Park image from 4th floor of Detroit Masonic Library (ca. 2008 By Mitchell Ozog)

DETROIT MASONIC TEMPLE LIBRARY AND MUSEUM HISTORY

By Thomas W. Brunk, Ph.D. 25 September 2007

The present Detroit Masonic Temple Library and Museum, Incorporated (DMTLM) signed its Articles of Incorporation on June 18, 1981. These were received by the Michigan Department of Commerce, Corporation and Securities Bureau on June 24, 1981 and filed (incorporation date) on July 9, 1981. The incorporation was under the title “Masonic Temple Library & Hall of Fame.” Our name was changed to “Detroit Masonic Temple Library and Museum” by an amendment to Article I, submitted on June 29, 2001 and approved July 14, 2001.

The DMTLM has its roots in the Masonic Library of Detroit (MLD), organized October 14, 1882, “under control of a Library Board composed of a Representative from each Masonic Body.”[1]

A photograph of the “Lodge Floor Library” in the old Masonic Temple was published in 1898.[2] The MLD printed standard bookplates on mint-green paper [2 ¾”W X 4 ¼”L] with spaces to record information particular to each book. These are found in many of our earliest volumes. The text reads:

No. _____
MASONIC LIBRARY OF DETROIT,

Presented by _____ A.L. 58__

REGULATION 2—This is a Reference, and not a Circulating Library, and no Book, Paper or other property thereof shall be taken from the Masonic Rooms.[3]

Another bookplate is found in our early volumes, either alone or in conjunction with the MLD bookplate. This is on rose-pink paper [1 ¾” W X 3 1/8”L] with the text.[4]

C. R. Bagg
MASONIC LIBRARY

No. _____

The Masonic Library of Detroit moved from the original Masonic Temple to the new temple in the late 1920s. Ink-on-linen plans from George D. Mason’s office indicate that the area now occupied by the Temple Grille was allocated to the library. The exact history of the MLD in the new temple is unclear. Nonetheless, our earliest volumes came from this organization. They were in use and later in storage until the present corporation was formed.

[1] Official Program and Souvenir Dedication of the Masonic Temple, Detroit, June 24th, A.D. 1897 A.L. 5897; John F. Eby & Company, Printers, 65 W. Congress St., Detroit, price 10 cents. George D. Mason’s copy, Burton Historical Collection, E&M, 977.4D4 366.1 m38. Unpaginated; listing of officers for 1897.

[2] Conover, Jefferson S. Freemasonry in Michigan — A Comprehensive History of Michigan Masonry From Its Earliest Introduction in 1764. (Coldwater, MI, 1898), v. 2, 490.

[3] No. 403, Jno. W. McGrath, May 15 A. L. 5883 is glued in Revised Constitution of the Grand Lodge of F. & A. Masons of the State of Michigan, Adopted January 11, 1866. (Detroit: The Detroit Free Press and Job Printing House, 1866). Constitution 1871 is embossed on front cover.

[4] Charles R. Bagg (October 6, 1838—August 17, 1899); portrait and biography. See: Freemasonry in Michigan, v. 2, 372-74.