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National Museum of African American History and Culture

Delegate Magazine 1969

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A THUMB NAIL SKETCH OF SHRINE HISTORY

On June 2, 1893, Palestine Temple was instituted as the first Temple in the Grand Council, which was instituted and organized.

On June 10, 1893, Rofelt Pasha, an Arabian Prince in company with other oriental visitors, acting in accordance with a special deputation, caused Illustrious John G. Jones to cross the HOT SANDS and conferred on him the SHRINE DEGREE, with power and authority to set up Temples and confer the degree of the Order.

From that date to September 1899, the history of the Ancient Egyptian Arabic Order Nobles Mystic Shrine is quite vague, with the exception that John G. Jones had an encounter with the United Supreme Council, Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite for the Southern Jurisdiction and Symbolic Masonry in the jurisdiction of Illinois that resulted in his expulsion and the call for reorganization, issued by Issac Holland of Pyramid Temple in September 1899.

With the reorganization, the Order was incorporated on November 13, 1901 and a charter issued in Washington, D.C. The formal reorganization had been accomplished at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with representatives from Pyramid temple, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and about one hundred other delegates.

We have grown from seven to one hundred seventy Temples. Even though or spirit was dimmed in 1916. When State and Federal Courts in Texas, Arkansas and Georgia issued permanent injunctions against Order of the Mystic Shrine. The injunctions forbade Negroes to wear the fez, jewels and emblems of the Order.

Those old Nobles, however, had the fortitude and tenacity to take their case to the United States Supreme Court and on June 5, 1929, Justice Vandeventer read a unanimous decision of the Court, which struck down the injunctions and permitted Negroes to continue to practice Shrinedom with interruption from others.

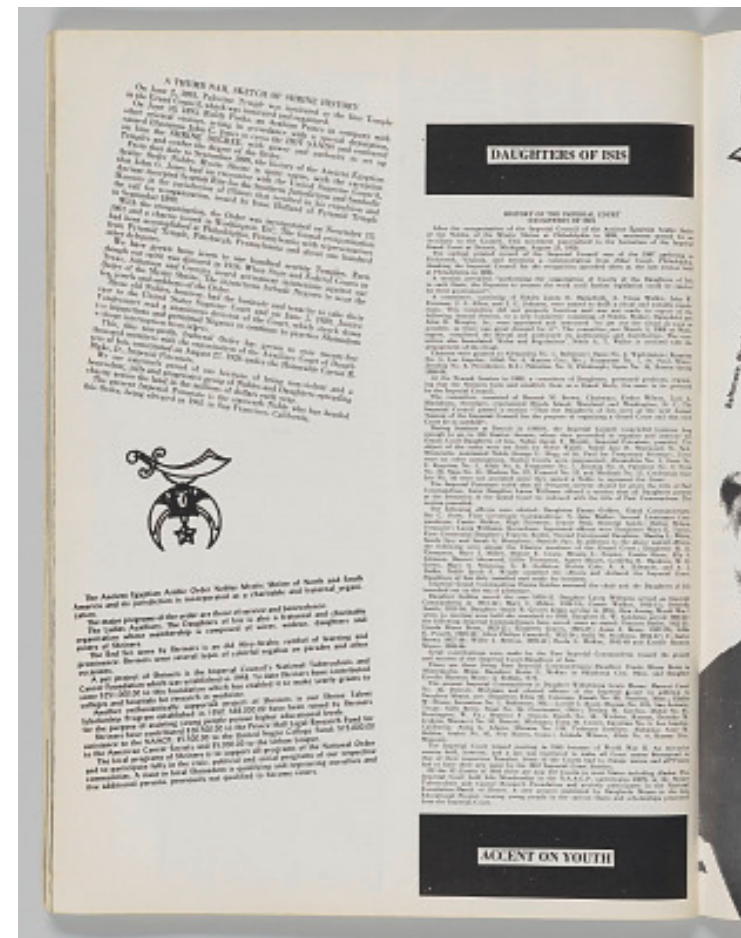
This, this non-profit, fraternal Order has grown to over twenty-five thousand members with the organization of the Auxiliary Court of Daughters of Isis, constituted on August 27, 1926 under the Honorable Caesar R. Blake, Jr., Imperial Potentate.

We are extremely proud of our heritage of being non-violent and a benevolent, jolly and progressive group of Nobles and Daughters spreading charity across the land in the millions of dollars each year.

The present Imperial Potentate is the sixteenth Noble who has headed this Order, being elevated in 1965 in San Francisco, California.

[image - drawing of a unity symbol of the Shriners comprising a sword over a crescent moon shape with horns downward, a face or mask the top, and a star hanging underneath, between the horns of the moon]]

The Ancient Egyptian Arabic Order Nobles Mystic Shrine of North and South America and its jurisdiction is incorporated as a charitable and fraternal organization.



The major programs of the order are those of service and benevolence.

The ladies Auxiliary, The Daughters of Isis is also a fraternal and charitable organization whose membership is composed of wives, widows, daughters and sisters of Shriners.

The Red Fez worn by Shriners is an old Afro-Arabic symbol of learning and prominence. Shriners wear several types of colorful regalias on parades and other occasions.

A pet project of Shriners is the Imperial Council's National Tuberculosis and Cancer Foundation which was established in 1948. To date Shriners have contributed some \$251,000.00 to this foundation which has enabled it to make yearly grants to colleges and hospitals for research in medicine.

Another enthusiastically supported project of Shriners is our Shrine Talent Scholarship Program established in 1950. \$68,000.00 have been raised by Shriners for the purpose of assisting young people pursue higher educational levels.

Shriners have contributed \$26,500.00 to the Prince Hall Legal Research Fund for assistance to the NAACP; \$5,500.00 to the United Negro College Fund; \$15,000.00 to the American Cancer Society and \$5,000.00 to the Urban League.

The local programs of Shriners is to support all programs of the National Order and to participate fully in the civic, political and social programs of our respective communities. A must in local Shrinedom is qualifying and registering ourselves and five additional persons, previously not qualified to become voters.

DAUGHTERS OF ISIS

HISTORY OF THE IMPERIAL COURT DAUGHTERS OF ISIS

After the reorganization of the Imperial Council of the Ancient Egyptian Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine at Philadelphia in 1899, sentiment spread for an Auxiliary to the Council. This movement materialized in the formation of the Imperial Grand Court at Detroit, Michigan, August 23, 1910.

The earliest printed record of the Imperial Coouncil was of the 1907 gathering in Richmond, Virginia, and mentions a communication from Zidac Court, Philadelphia, thanking the Imperial Council for the recognition accorded them at the last session held at Philadelphia in 1906.

A motion prevailed "authorizing the organization of Courts of the Daughters of Isis in each Oasis, the Deputies to oversee the work until further legislation could be enacted for their government."

A committee, consisting of Nobles James O. Bampfield, A. Texas

Waller, John W. Freeman, J.S. Allen, and J.C. Johnson, were named to draft a ritual and suitable regulations. This committee did not properly function and was not ready to report at the following Annual Session, so a new committee consisting of Nobles Waller, Bampffield and John H. Murphy, Sr., were appointed and instructed "to get out the ritual as soon as possible, as there was great demand for it." The committee met March 4, 1909 at Washington, completed the Ritual and authorized its publication and distribution. The committee also formulated 'Rules and Regulations'. Noble A.T. Waller is credited with the arrangement of the ritual.

Charters were granted to Alexandria No. 1, Baltimore; Oasis No. 2, Washington; Egyptian No. 5, Los Angeles; Allah No. 6, Kansas City, Mo.; Fezzanese No. 7, St. Paul, Minn.; Zenobia No. 8, Providence, R.I.; Palestine No. 9, Pittsburgh; Syria No. 10, Boston during 1908-09.

At the Newark Session in 1909, a committee of Daughters, presented petitions, requesting that the Shriners form and establish them as a Grand Body, the same to be governed by the Imperial Council.

The committee, consisted of Hannah M. Brown, Chairman; Esther Wilson, Lucy A. Blackburn, Secretary, represented Rhode Island, Maryland and Washington, D.C. The Imperial Council passed a motion "that the Daughters of Isis meet at the next Annual Session of the Imperial Council for the purpose of organizing a Grand Court and that each Court be so notified".

During Sessions at Detroit in (1910), the Imperial Council suspended business long enough to go to 153 Gratiot Avenue, where they proceeded to organize and institute the Grand Court-Daughters of Isis. Noble Jacob F. Wright, Imperial Potentate, presided. The object of the order were set forth by Noble Waller, Noble Jose H. Sherwood, St. Paul, Minnesota, nominated Noble George I. Hogg of St. Paul for Temporary Secretary. There were no other nominations. Twelve Courts were represented: Alexandria No. 1, Oasis No. 2, Egyptian No. 5, Allah No. 6, Fezzanese No. 7, Zenobia No. 8, Palestine No. 9, Syria No. 10, Naja No. 11, Moslem No. 12, Pyramid No. 13, and Medinah No. 15. Credentials from Isis No. 16 were not accepted since they named a Noble to represent the Court.

The Imperial Potentate ruled that all delegates present should be given the title of Past Commandress. Later Daughter Laura Williams offered a motion that all Daughters present at the formation of the Grand Court be endowed with the title of Past Commandress. The motion prevailed.

The following officers were elected: Daughters Emma Golden, Grand Commandresses; Ida C. Scott, First Lieutenant Commandress; S. Jane Waller, Second Lieutenant Commandress; Laura Williams, Recordress. Appointed officer were Daughters Mary E. Taylor, First Ceremonial Daughter; Francis Butler, Second Ceremonial Daughter; Martha L. White, Inside Spy, and Sarah A. Humphrey, Outside Spy. In addition to the above named officers, the following were among the Charter members of the Grande court: Daughters M.E. Thompson, Mary I. Miller, Minnie E. Lewis, Minnie L. Frazier, Ursula Hines, Ella S. Johnson, Harriet Sherwood, Lillie Thompson, Agnes Moore, Cordelia E. Hawkins, M.E. Green, Mary A. Simmons, A.E. Goldston, Richie Cole, A.A. Edwards, and A.J. Duffin. Noble Jacob F. Wright installed the officers and declared the Imperial Court, Daughters of Isis duly installed and

ready for business.

Imperial Grand Commandress Emma Golden assumed the chair and the Daughters of Isis launched out on the sea of adventure.

Daughter Golden served the year 1910-11. Daughter Laura Williams served as Imperial Commandress in 1911-12; Mary I. Miller, 1912-13; Cassie Walker, 1913-15; Bessiella Smith, 1915-16. Daughter Annie B. Groves began serving in 1916, then during World War I when no meeting were held she remained to 1920. Daughter E.W. Goldston served 1920-29; Lillie E. Powell, 1929-32; Alice Philips Campbell, 1932-34; Sally M. Stockton, 1934-37; T. Carter Brown 1937-39, Willie J. Britton, 1939-42; Boula L. McKay, 1942-48 and Ercelle Harmon Moore, 1948-66.

Great contributions were made by the Past Imperial Commandress toward the growth and success of the Imperial Court-Daughters of Isis.

There are three living Past Imperial Commandresses - Daughter Ursula Hines Botts in Minneapolis, Minn. Daughter Beula L. McKay in Oklahoma City, Okla. and Daughter Ercelle Harmon Moore in Buffalo, N.Y.

The present Imperial Commandress is Daughter Wilhelmina Lewis Means, Maracci Court No. 32, Detroit, Michigan and elected officers of the Imperial Court in addition to Daughter Means, are: Daughters Eliza M. Coleman, Rissah No. 80, Natchez, Miss.; Gladys W. Dixon, Jerusalem No. 1, Baltimore, Md.; Lucille I. Boyd, Moussa No. 119; San Antonio, Texas; Sally Berry, Sinai No. 35, Cincinnati, Ohio; Thelma M. Gordon, Abdul No. 87, Huntington, W. Va.; Beatrice F. Sexton, Emith No. 18; Wichita, Kansas, Dorothy M. Jenkins, Marracci No. 32, Detroit, Michigan; Edna M. Center, Egyptian No. 5, Los Angeles, California; Anita G. Adams, Mizraim No. 110, Tuskegee Institute, Alabama; Anne M. Bolden, Arabic No. 95, New Haven, Conn.; Amanda Wilmer, Allah No. 6, Kansas City, Missouri.

The Imperial Court missed meeting in 1945 because of World War II. An executive session held, however, and a law was instituted to make all Court names correspond to that of their respective Temples. Some of the Courts had to change names and all Fezzes had to have that new name by the 1947 Imperial Court Session.

Of the 12 Courts of 1910 there are now 137 Courts in most States including Alaska. The Imperial Court hold Life Membership in the N.A.A.C.P. participates 100% in the Shrine Tuberculosis and Cancer Research Foundation and actively participates in the National Foundation-March Of Dimes. A new project instituted by Daughters Means is the Isis Educational Project, tuoring young people in the various Oases and scholarships presented from the Imperial Court.

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