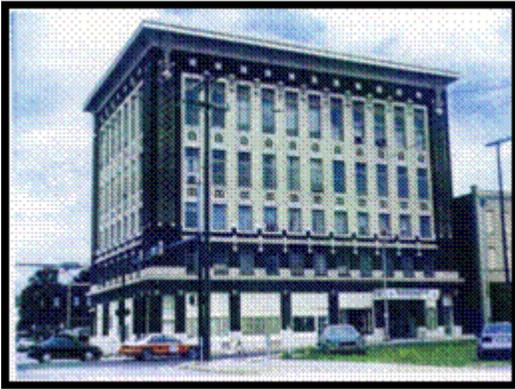




A Brief History of Our Masonic Temple

**THE MOST WORSHIPFUL UNION
GRAND LODGE
Most Ancient and Honorable Fraternity
FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS, PHA
FLORIDA AND BELIZE, CENTRAL
AMERICA JURISDICTION, INC.**



In May of 1901, The Great Fire of Jacksonville, Florida, destroyed the first Masonic Temple, which at that time was the home of seven Masonic lodges. Approximately 2000 acres of the city was destroyed. This included libraries, government buildings, store, and social buildings.

An extract taken from an appeal of Grand Master Dickerson to Masons worldwide after the fire is as follows:

*"TO THE MASONIC FRATERNITY OF THE UNITED STATES AND ALL THE WORLD:
Friday, May 3, 1901, a great fire originated in the northwestern part of the city and in a mattress factory conducted by whites. This factory was in a colored community. The wind was high and the houses dry, and a great configuration swept in its path more than 150 solid blocks or more than 2000 acres, leaving homeless 20,000 people and destroying nearly \$25,000,000 worth of property. Whereas, there is*

hardly an inhabitant of the great metropolis of the State of Florida who has not lost his home, business or employment, and in many cases all, and among the victims being those who would under other circumstances be the first to contribute to the relief of the distressed; and whereas, being unable to help ourselves, and whereas, seven lodges have been made homeless, and our great Temple destroyed, therefore we issue this appeal to the Masonic fraternity wherever dispersed around the globe. SEND ANYTHING. Not only were houses burned, but there contents. Even women and children did not escape the destructive flames. Send provisions, shoes, wearing apparel, money-anything not perishable."

Thus, the records for the first Temple re destroyed. The building of the second Masonic Temple at 410 Broad Street began in 1912. The immediate Grand Cabinet at that time was:

**REVEREND JOHN H. DICKERSON,
GRAND MASTER,
D.D. POWELL, DEPUTY GRAND
MASTER,
NEWTON COLE, SENIOR GRAND
WARDEN,
A.C. ELDER, JUNIOR GRAND WARDEN,
H.J. JUNIORS, GRAND TREASURER,
E.I. ALEXANDER, GRAND SECRETARY**

The architects selected for our building was Victor E. Mark and Leeroy Sheftall of the architectural firm of Mark and Sheftall. Victor E. Mark moved to Jacksonville in 1901 and in 1907 began his architectural training in the office of Henry J. Klutho,

native of Savannah, Georgia, began working in Klutho's office in 1907. Mark & Sheftall had a very successful partnership that lasted twenty-two (22) years, and were credited with the designs of many noted buildings in Jacksonville; The Moulton & Kyle Funeral Home; Robert E. Lee Senior High School; Andrew Jackson Senior High School; Riverside Presbyterian Church and Sunday School Building; Oxford Hall Apartments; South Jacksonville City Hall; B.F. Lee Theological Seminary (Edward Waters College) and several others.

Construction of the Temple began in 1912 and occupancy was available in 1913, although work continued until 1916. The building's designated functions then were social, commerce and trade, clubhouse, business, organizational and professional. The decorative style of the Grand Lodge is a mixture of "Prairie" and "Chicago" School of Architect, which sprang up after the turn of the 20th century. A decorative terra cotta artwork, protruding horizontal roofline and Masonic symbols can be seen upon the building. In 1912, the five story reinforce concrete structure was valued at \$102, 000. The Masonic Temple was the home of retail stores and the black owned Anderson Bank. The second and third floors housed rental offices, with the two top floors being used by the Grand Lodge. In 1980, the Masonic Temple was entered in The National Register of Historic Places. This meant that federal funds could not be used to destroy or damage it. Federal matching funds could be granted for restoration due to the "historic" designation.

who was the most significant architect in Jacksonville between the Great Fire of 1901 and World War I. Leeroy Sheftall, a Today, the building is still owned and operated by THE MOST WORSHIPFUL UNION GRAND LODGE, MOST ANCIENT AND HONORABLE FRATERNITY, FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS, PRINCE HALL AFFILIATION, FLORIDA AND BELIZE, CENTRAL AMERICA JURISDICTION, INCORPORATED. The Masonic Temple is currently conducting a 1.8-million-dollar renovation project, scheduled to be complete in 2004. The building today is worth over 8 million dollars.

The current Grand Lodge Officers are as follows:

**DR. MICHAEL R. MOORE, GRAND MASTER,
LEE CARTER, DEPUTY GRAND MASTER,
ANTHONY T. STAFFORD, SENIOR GRAND WARDEN,
WALTER GULLEY, JR., JUNIOR GRAND WARDEN,
PHILLIP A. ROBINSON, GRAND SECRETARY,
MELVIN WRIGHT, GRAND TREASURER.**

*Note: The sources for the history of the Great Fire of 1901 and the Architects is the Jacksonville Historical Society. All information is public record.