

Elks Lodge #98 New Dream Home Become a Reality

This story is true!
Not a word has been changed, unbelievable as it may sound --- Des Moines Lodge #98, Benevolent Protective Order of Elks have a new \$125,000 home. Debt free after being in rented quarters since January 2, 1969.

Ninety-Eight was located downtown at 414 Fifth Avenue for a half century. It became one of the largest lodges and finest Elks Temples in the Middle-west.

After a fire in the late 1950's it was again rebuilt at the same location. Then came the move to Urbana, high taxes, parking space and all the other problems with the loop area. After these trying times the building was sold on October 12, 1968; debts paid, and the balance put in the bank for a building fund. January 2, 1969 rented quarters were obtained at 24th & Woodland in Des Moines.

A search was made for a site of a new lodge building, but building costs,

land costs, etc. always presented some obstacle. Consequently, the membership turned down each proposal for a new building.

December 8, 1969 Frank Hise, Grand Exalted Ruler, of the order, and a former Iowan, met with Ray Terrill Exalted Ruler, Larry Fogelson Leading Knight and Harold Atkins Lecturing Knight and urged them to continue to search for an urban location, parking and a modern building. They were to impress upon their members, old and new, the change in times that necessitated this. He mentioned the need for a place for family activity instead of a men's only fraternal lodge.

May 20, 1970 a lease was signed for another downtown location at 101 East Locust and again the search for a new site slowed down. August 1st, 1971 the landlord of this location was faced with the same urban problems that had beset the Elks as landowners. This later

proved to be a blessing in disguise. He announced that renewal of the lease could only be at a much higher rate.

August 9th, 1971 this news was brought to the membership. Robert Fallis, Exalted Ruler announced that with a great amount of research and the promise of help from a few members and suppliers that for the \$46,528 in the building fund a shell could be built to provide a meeting place. Later ceilings, wood floors, etc. could be added.

August 23rd the membership voted unanimously to build an 80X40 two-story building at 5420 N.E. 12th Avenue 7 miles east of the Capitol, on old East University. Two acres of land were purchased on a farm at the site, subject to Grand Lodge approval. August 24th the Grand Lodge was petitioned, but due to an error on the application final approval didn't arrive until October 16th, 1971. On this date the building committee

assumed the following responsibilities.

Robert Fallis, "E.R." Chairman at Large; Donard Crawford "Trustee", Architect; Jack McConkey "Trustee", General Construction Superintendent; Jim Caliguiri, Electrical; John Milligan "Lecturing Knight", Mechanical; Robert Cobley "P.E.R. & Trustee Chairman", Financial; Ed Shipley "Secretary", Financial.

Sunday, October 17th the ground-breaking ceremony took place in a bean field.

October 27th, upon receipt of a building permit formal construction started. The weatherman cooperated and by December 8th the masonry work was completed. L.P. gas heaters were used so that the members could work at night. Many worked fifty or sixty hours a week in addition to regular jobs; to get their Lodge completed.

The Does #25 and wives provided hot meals at all hours. Materials were donated, a contractor loaned his heavy equipment and operators. January 3rd, 1972 the furnishings were moved

from the rented building to our new home. Monday, January 13th the first meeting was held in the new building.

About this time Elks, Does and friends that could not work on the building, began to send in contributions to the building fund. As these began to arrive it was decided a little more finishing could be done. Ceilings were installed; one member started decorating and virtually completed the project on his own. March 13th, the Does #25 met with the building committee, and announced that they would carpet the building. April 8th the Dance of the Month club asked to hold their first dance. Members laid clear plastic over the mud to provide an entrance. The dance was a success and over \$400 was donated to the building fund!

April 29th the bowlers had their bowling banquet and almost to a man turned their prize money, amounted to \$1000 over to the building fund. A paving fund drive was started and \$2,500 raised, again our contractor member donated rock, machinery and manpower and on May 25th,

1972 paving was completed, a parking lot rocked, and soil started to be laid. June 2nd, the Flag Pole was set up and Old Glory flew over Des Moines' Lodge #98. June 3rd was the climax with the grand opening and installation of officers.