

The Greatest Pilgrimage Ever

In 1900, Saladin was honored at the Imperial Council Session held in Washington, D.C., when Illustrious Sir Lou B. Winsor, an attorney from Reed City, was elected to the office of Imperial Potentate.

The summer after Noble Winsor's induction, Aloha Temple in the Hawaiian Islands was in situated by Imperial Sir Winsor and under his direction was conducted the great and pleasant Pilgrimage to Honolulu. Thirty three Temples were represented in the accompanying group, including members of Saladin as the Honor Guard.



At the institution of Aloha Temple 42 Novices made their "Pilgrimage to Mecca" in the crater of an extinct volcano within which the sands were reported to be still hot. Not the least to cross those burning sands was Prince David, heir to the throne of Queen Liliouokalani of the monarchy ruling the Hawaiian Islands at that time. The Queen did all in her power to make the Shriners happy during their stay in her domain, and it is probably accurate to say that this is the only time when Shriners received a truly Royal welcome. Because this trip was advertised as the "Greatest Pilgrimage ever offered to the Nobility of the Mystic Shrine," and probably still ranks as one of the greatest ever undertaken; it is proper to expend a few words detailing the itinerary.

The Pilgrimage covered a distance of 11,324 from February 25 to April 2, 1901. The reader should remember that this was before ships were equipped with wireless and there was a long period of time when there was no direct contact with the mainland.

A special train of solid vestibuled sleepers, with dining cars attached, was chartered from Grand Rapids to San Francisco running through without change on their

own special time schedule. Meals were served a-la-carte with accommodations strictly limited to 160 Nobles and their Ladies.

For the ocean voyage, the "elegant ocean steamship" Sonoma was chartered. The ship's capacity was limited to 233 persons, presumably including the crew. Obviously, not all those riding the train participated in the sea voyage. In the words of the trip chairman, Noble George Sinclair, "There will be no steerage passengers. We will own the ship and have free access to all parts of our floating palace, save those occupied by the officers and crew..."



Imperial Sir, Lou B. Winsor

Imperial Sir Winsor, together with his Imperial escort, made an official inspection tour of all the Temples en route.

Medinah Temple was the first official stop. From there to Za Ga Zig Temple in Des Moines, Iowa, and then to Moila Temple in St. Joseph, Missouri. A stop at Abdallah Temple in Leavenworth, Kansas, preceded the visit to Ararat Temple in Kansas City, Missouri.

The caravan proceeded from there to Hella Temple in Dallas, Texas, where they were met by 500 Nobles as a welcoming committee. Hosting them next was El Zaribah Temple in Phoenix, Arizona; Al Malaikah Temple, Los Angeles; and Islam Temple, San Francisco, which was the port of departure for Honolulu.

The headquarters hotel, while in Honolulu, was the Moana. Described as "...a splendid new hotel, but recently completed, and must certainly be first class, as it is furnished throughout with Grand Rapids furniture."

On the return to San Francisco, they headed for Portland, Oregon, where they were received by Al Kader Temple. Seattle, Tacoma and Spokane where the Temples Nile, Afifi and El Katif are located gave the pilgrimage a view of the state of Washington "when they still had cedar trees 50 feet in circumference."



Moana Hotel

Algeria Temple in Helena, Montana, was the next official visit, and then to El Zagal Temple in Fargo, North Dakota. The two cities of Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, homes of Zuhrah and Osman Temples, hosted the next visit and, finally, back to Medinah Temple in Chicago where the caravan officially disbanded.

Thus ended the greatest pilgrimage ever undertaken by the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, wherein Aloha Temple was the 83rd Temple to be created and 17 Temples were visited en route.

Cost per person, in addition to meals and hotels, for the special sleeper train and boat was \$250.