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**CERTIFICATION OF STATE REGISTER LISTING**

The Register of Historic Kansas Places includes all Kansas properties nominated to the National Register as well as lower threshold properties which are listed on the state register only.

Property Name: Masonic Lodge

Address: 107 W. Lincoln, Wellington, KS 67152

Legal:

County: Sumner

Owner: Richard Spevak & Jan Paffendorf-Spevak

Address: 1309 W. 29th Street South, Wichita, KS 67217

National Register eligible \_\_\_\_\_

State Register eligible   X  

This property was approved by the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review for the Register of Historic Kansas Places on February 23, 2002.

I hereby certify that this property is listed on the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

Richard D. Penkeat      2/26/02  
State Historic Preservation Officer      Date

9/95

## DESCRIPTION

The Masonic Lodge (c. 1909- 1910) is located at 107 W. Lincoln in Wellington, Kansas. Wellington, the county seat is located in the center of Sumner County, Kansas. The Masonic Lodge is located within the original township borders as laid out by the Wellington Town Company in March 1871. The lodge was built on lots 11 and 12 in block 67 and sits on the Northwest corners of Washington and Lincoln Avenues located in the business and governmental district of Sumner County.

The building is a three story, red brick building done in an eclectic early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial style. Decorative brick corbeling embellishes the building's window and door surround. A wide pressed metal eave supported by large brackets punctuates the building's roofline. A brick parapet containing the Masonic emblem rises above the eaves.

The building measures approximately 50 x 130 feet and maintains an eastern facade orientation. The east and south elevations are faced with brick was made from shale and burned with natural gas that was produced at the Kansas Buff Brick and Manufacturing of Neodesha. (Sumner Co. Star, Feb. 24, 1909). The secondary elevations are faced with a lesser quality brick.

The lodge is actually a combination of two buildings. A late nineteenth century, two- story brick building that stood on the southern section of the lot was incorporated into the new building. Large iron columns placed at intervals of sixteen feet and seven inches were inserted along the south wall to provide structural support as the new building was built around the old. The roof had seven trusses and drainpipe. The building has only a partial basement measuring 19 x 136 feet, with one outside entrance located on the southeast corner.

The building retains its storefront configuration on the first floor. Half of the amethyst/prism glass facades located above the plate glass windows are still present. Fenestration on the second and third floors is composed of fifty-six 1/1 double hung sash windows arranged in single and double formation. The third floor windows are surmounted with transoms.

The original architectural ornamentation is still in place. There are "galvanized iron cornices above the first floor and surmounting the third story". (The Monitor Press, Jan. 27, 1909) The Masons placed a large emblem depicting the Masonic symbol located under the third floor crown façade located on the east Side. Also designating this building as a Masonic Temple is a large red marble cornerstone on the southeast corner. The cornerstone identifies the original use of the building as a Royal Arch Masonic Lodge including the Knights Templar division.

The building's main entrance is located on Lincoln Avenue. The foyer contains the original woodwork, the main staircase light with and the original chandelier and original elevator by Montgomery. The elevator provides access from the basement to the third floor and has been repaired. Lessors and their clients use it for daily conveyance.

The ground floor was designed to contain five gracious store/office areas for lease. "The second floor was designed as "office rooms" totaling 14, though arranged to be suites. This floor is transected by a large hallway that runs from east to west," (The Monitor Press, Jan. 27, 1909) and light with original light fixtures. This floor utilized electricity and natural gas for lighting.

Gas fixtures were converted to use electricity. The interior wall partitions are still original. The bottom half is lath and plaster while the top half is glass in the Victorian Flora pattern. The woodwork is still original. Above the numerous doors are transoms, many of which are still operational. "This floor also has a system of lavatories and modern sanitary equipment." (The Monitor Press, Jan. 27, 1909)

The third floor contains two complete lodge rooms, each with its outer chamber, robing and paraphernalia rooms. The west hall also serves as a banquet room and has an attached kitchen. This floor also contains two bathrooms. (The Monitor Press, Jan. 27, 1909; Peoples Voice, Jan. 21, 1909, Feb. 24, 1909; Wellington Daily News, Jan. 20, 1909) Due to many years of deferred building maintenance, this floor failed to meet building and occupancy codes until 1999; consequently this floor retains much of its original interior. Woodwork, lights, ceiling fans and controls, and kitchen cabinets and sink.

Unfortunately, the economic conditions of Wellington have changed since 1910. Like many small mid-western towns they are struggling with the issue competing economically and staying a viable community. Wellington has lost many of its fine old buildings due to neglect.

The current owners purchased the Masonic Lodge in 1999. Since that time primary repairs have been to the infrastructure. A new roof and drainage system have been installed, ADA concerns have been addressed, and the original iron fire-escape has been repaired. All fifty-six exterior windows require repair, caulking and or painting, old sinks need resurfacing and plumbing and electrical systems need to be updated to meet modern expectations and regulations and large areas of brick need to be tuck-pointed.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The Masonic Lodge (c.1909- 1910) is being nominated to the Register of Historic Kansas Places for its historic significance in the contribution to the social and moral fabric, and commerce of Wellington. The lodge represents the members commitment to “benevolent and social purposes and for the transaction of business etc...” (Application of Charter, May 11, 1903.) As stated in the charter, the purpose of erecting a large property was for the purpose of providing revenues to fund Masonic activities and to benefit the residents of Wellington, Kansas. The Masons accomplished their purpose by leasing office and store real estate to local merchants and businesses.

Architect R.H. Roberts designed the three-story brick building and construction was provided by the Wurster Construction Company of Wichita, Kansas. (Wellington Daily News, Jan. 20, 1909 and Peoples Voice, Jan. 21, 1909) William Boyle acted as project foreman throughout the building’s construction. The building cost “approximately \$25,050.00. (Sumner Co. Star, April 8, 1908.) The membership dues and the sale of stock and bonds provided original construction funds.

### **Construction of Wellington’s Masonic Lodge**

On April 8, 1908 the Masonic Temple Company announced it’s intention to start construction of their lodge building which is to be built directly north across the street from the new Stewart edifice. “It will be located on the northwest corner of Washington and Lincoln Avenues known as 127 W. Lincoln, Wellington, Kansas. It is expected to vie in beauty with its neighbor.” (Sumner Co. Star, April 8, 1908)

The construction of the lodge was fraught with delays. Construction finally began in February 1909 “when D H Kurth, and a squad of men began tearing off the roof and the awning over little frame buildings on the building site” as per directions received from the Temple board of directors.” (Daily News, Feb. 4, 1909) Once they were removed the shacks excavation of the basement should have begun. It didn’t, as the construction contract was not awarded till March 31, 1909.

The Wurster Construction Company of Wichita (and St. Louis) was awarded the construction contract. There is conflicting information about the amount of the bid. The Monitor Press, March 31, 1909 issue reported a bid of \$22,858.00 with a completion date of September 1, 1909 while the Sumner County Star, March 31, 1909 reported a bid of \$23,779.00 with a completion date of August 15th, 1909. By May 5, 1909 the Sumner County Star reported the construction material will finally delivered to the site and the Wurster Construction Company “will begin to comply with the articles of the contract and “avoid all further delays.”

Sometime between the dates May 5, 1909 and Oct 7, 1909 the Masonic Company and Mr. Buttery agreement concerning the “sharing of a common wall” fell apart. This further delayed the continued erection of the temple. The court finally resolved the matter. Both parties finally comprised with the result being; that “Mr. Buttrey agreed to build the east 75 feet of the common north wall and erect the existing building to the height of the agreed two story height. This would allow the Masons to construct their third story over both; the new and existing structures as organically designed.” (The Monitor Press, Oct. 6,1909; Wellington Daily News, Oct. 4, 1909.) Eventually, the Buttreys sold the property to the Wellington Temple Corporation.

In the mean time there was another delay due to materials. The foreman Mr. Boyle announced on Oct. 6, 1909 those 450,000 brick and a force of bricklayers will arrive from Wichita to complete the Temple. (Sumner County Star, Oct. 6, 1909) By December 30, 1909 it was announced the shipment of brick was the wrong color and size and needed to be reordered. (Wellington Daily News, December 30, 1909) Regardless of the previous delays, the Masons laid the cornerstone on September 29, 1909. This too didn't go as planned. Apparently outside Masonic officials were to take charge of the affairs and make it quite elaborate, but for reasons not explained this plan was abandoned at the last minute. Local Masons took charge and presented a Masonic Ceremony.

“The Wellington Masons, Blue Lodge, No. 150 in the Kansas jurisdiction entertained all Sumner County Masons at their housewarming in honor of the opening of its new hall this Monday evening. The number of attendance was estimated at 250. These members came from the “Caldwell, Conway Springs, Argonia, Oxford, South Haven, Belle Plaine, Mulvane and other points. They arrived by the Rock Island R.R. and automobiles. (The Monitor Press, Oct. 12, 1910) After the elaborate Masonic ceremonies, guests dined on oysters, celery sandwiches, sandwiches, crackers, pickles, coffee, frappe. Cigars were served to all male members to finalize the completion of the Masonic Temple. (The Monitor Press, Oct. 12, 1910)

### **A Historical Sketch of Wellington**

By October 12th, 1910, the date of the Masonic Lodge housewarming, Wellington was a booming community. (People's Voice, Oct. 7, 1909; The Monitor Press, Oct. 12, 1910) Sumner County was averaging four million bushels of wheat a year the largest yield of any county in the United States. As a result, Wellington became the second largest milling center in the state of Kansas. The finished products were shipped to leading markets all over the world primarily by rail.

The Santa Fe Rail Road had a division headquarters for its Southern line allowing products to be shipped to far away markets in California and Amarillo, Texas, The average monthly payroll was \$40,000.00 monthly and they were continuing to expand their yards and facilities. Other lines such as The Chicago, Rock Island Pacific, the Midland Valley also passed through Wellington expanding markets in the Dakotas and the Eastern Seaboard. By then, Wellington businesses had a combined capital of about half a million.

The town was also known for its large conservative banking institutions, which consisted of two national, and two state banks. Because of the combined capital of \$297,000.00 there were underground tunnels to connect and protect them.

Wellington was a modern city. Its schools were ranked the highest in the state with their high school having the highest enrollment in the state. It had churches, a civic auditorium that seated 500 people, three hotels and over 200 private residents. Wellington was able to meet their citizens' daily needs as it had its own water works plant, sewer system, and electric and natural gas plants.

When the construction of the Masonic Temple was begun in 1909, the federal census enumerated over 6,000 residents. The Masons chose to build their lodge in the heart of the commercial and governmental district to better serve their members and community. As Wellington continued to

expand, the lodge building played an important economic role as it housed local retail and commercial concerns.

### **Freemasonry in Wellington-Historical Sketch**

The Grand Masters of Kansas Masonry granted dispensation to organize the Masonic Lodge in Wellington on February 2, 1874, the year of the "grasshoppers". This auspicious designation resulted because grasshoppers descended in the greater Wellington area and consumed crops and gardens. At this time the city was only four years old, the grade school was two years old and it was five years before the arrival of the railroad and twenty-five years before the first automobile made its appearance.

The Lodge had its first meeting on February 9, 1874. The Masons continued their good work for the community at large and subsequently experienced substantial growth. By October 15th, 1878 they had 230 members. On May 13th, 1884 the St. John's Commandery of the Knights Templar, No. 24 was chartered and had a 193 members. Women's needs were met by the chartering of The Order of the Eastern Star, No. 157 on May 16, 1895 and had 350 members. Meetings were held in a variety of locations until September 1, 1910 when they moved into their own quarters on the third floor of first Masonic Temple built by Masonic Temple Company.

Masons continued to be prominent social and political leaders and thus the establishment of The Social Order of the Beauceant, No. 14, on February 14th, 1921 with 59 members. These order later established youth groups for member's children. For the boys, The Order of DeMolay, No. 497 was chartered January 5, 1922 with 100 boys and the Order of the Rainbow for Girls, No. 1 on April 23rd. 1923 with 88 members. By 1923, total membership was 1,510 members. In 1984 a new Masonic Temple was erected to meet their changing needs.

Early Lodge members were prominent civic leaders as evidenced by some of the additions to the City of Wellington being named after them, such as L.K. Myers Addition and the C.R. Godfrey Addition. Joseph M. Thralls, one of founding lodge members later became mayor of Wellington in 1924. These are just a few examples. The membership list boasted doctors, lawyers, druggist, newspaper editors, local businessmen and other contributing members of the community in good social and moral standing. Wellington history shows how the Masonic organizations had a prominent and active part in the development of the community as many of them were chosen to hold leadership positions.

Today, Masons still have an active role in community. They will continue to produce leaders to assist Wellington maintaining its small town atmosphere while being a viable community in the New Millennium. (Information obtained from interviewing Edsel L. King, Senior Warden of the Wellington Lodge, #150.)

### **Current Use**

While no longer a Masonic Lodge, the building still provides office and commercial leases to local businesses. The simplistic and utilitarian design of the building lends itself to adapting to the future needs of the community while continuing to remind people of their cultural heritage. Offices in the building are leased to a sheltered work shop for school age children, a massage therapist, an insurance and title service, and a photographer.

## **Major Bibliographical References**

### **Books:**

Graybill, Ben W. History of Kansas Masonry. (Topeka: Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Kansas, 1975).

Prentis, Noble L. History of Kansas. (Topeka, KS., Caroline E. Prentis, 1904).

Haywood, H.L., Freemasonry and the Bible., (Collins Clear-Type Press, London and Glasgow, 1947).

### **Interviews:**

Interviewee- Mr. Edsel L. King, Senior Warden of the Wellington Lodge, #150, Wellington, Kansas.

Interviewer- Jan Spevak Dates-Nov. 7th. and 25th., 2000. Documentation of information available at the Masonic Lodge archives located at 2129 North A Street, Wellington, Kansas 67152.

### **Newsletter:**

Chisholm Trail Museum Volunteers, Wellington Takes Root on the 1871 Kansas Prairie, 1971.

### **Legal Documents:**

(Located at the Sumner county Court House, Department of Deeds, Wellington, Kansas.)

Indenture/Ownership Papers, Sumner County, Records of Deeds, Book 2, pg. 73, September 13, 1872.

Indenture/Ownership Papers, Sumner County, Records of Deeds, Book 8, pg. 373, February 26, 1879.

Indenture/Ownership Papers, Sumner County, Records of Deeds, Book 48, pg. 407, October 10, 1887.

Deed Record, Sumner County Record of Deeds, Book 46, pg. 366, March 5, 1887.

Deed Record, Sumner County Record of Deeds, Book 44, pg. 75, February 5, 1889.

Corporation Deed, Sumner County Record of Deeds, Book 96, pg. 497, May 9, 1901.

Indenture/Ownership Papers, Sumner County, Records of Deeds, Book 91, pg. 273, October 18, 1901.

Agreement, Between Arthur F. Bohanna and the Wellington Masons, Records of Deeds, Book R, pg. 117, March 10, 1903.

Application for Charter, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas, May 11, 1903.

Charter, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas, August 17, 1903.

Wellington Masonic Temple Company of Wellington Capitalization Record, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas, January 27, 1959.

**Newspapers:**

“Masonic Building In Near Future-Masonic Temple Company is Making Arrangements to Start as Once the Erection of a fine Structure,” Sumner County Star, April 8, 1908.

“Masonic Building Prospects Furthered-Sumner Chapter No., 37, R.A.M., Follows Lead Commandery,” Sumner County Star, April 22, 1908.

“Masonic Plans Come- New Structure at Washington and Lincoln to be Beautiful And Commodious,” Wellington Daily News, February 9, 1909.

“The Masonic Temple-Plans For The New Building Have Been Received And contract Will Soon Be Let,” Peoples Voice, February 25, 1909.

“The Masonic Temple Plans-Provide For an Elegant Building of Three Stories For Lodge and Business Purposes,” The Monitor Press, January 27, 1909.

“Masons Are For Theatre-Wellington’s Masonic Lodge May Put play House in New Building,” Wellington Daily News, February 9, 1909.

“Masonic Temple Building-Work To Start Soon,” Sumner County Star, February 24, 1909.

“Masons Are At It Sure-Structures on Site of New Building at Washington and Lincoln Being Removed,” Wellington Daily News, February 24, 1909.

“Work Has Begun-Two New Business Buildings For The South Part of the Business Section-Three Story Masonic Temple,” Peoples Voice, February 25, 1909.

“Antlers Safe Now-Installation of Rope Fire Escapes in Big Hotel Insures Guests From Fire,” Wellington Daily News, March 16, 1909.

“Can’t Use Main Street-H. L. Buttrey Refused Permission to Move His Building in Washington Avenue,” Peoples Voice, March 18, 1909.

“Masonic Contract is Let, The Wurster Construction Company of Wichita, Successful Bidders for Building,” The Monitor Press, March 31, 1909.

“Masonic Temple Contract-Wurster Construction Company Gets Contract,” Sumner County Star, March 31, 1909.

“Give Full Support To Masonic Building-Trustees Last Night Pled Moral and Financial Support in Erection of the Structure,” Sumner County Star, April 29, 1909.

“Masonic Temple Work Now On- A Representative of the Construction Company is Here Arranging for Active Work on New Structure,” Sumner County Star, May 5, 1909.



“Dedication of Big Lodge,” Wellington Daily News, June 6, 1909.

“Will Finish The Temple-Masonic Building Company to Build their New Temple Narrower than Contemplated,” Wellington Daily News, September 9, 1909.

“Masons Will Have To Remove Brick-This Order Given to Paving Committee At Council Meeting-Make Room for Paving,” Sumner County Star, September 22, 1909.

“Corner Stone Laid,” Wellington Daily News, September 29, 1909.

“Masons to Go Along-Three Story Building Will Be Erected on Corner Below Jacob Engle,” Wellington Daily News, October 4, 1909.

“Began Work On Masonic Temple-Force of Bricklayers Here in the Morning-Brick to be Completed in Four Weeks,” Sumner County Star, October 6, 1909.

“Agreement Reached Masonic Temple to be Completed according to the First Plans,” The Monitor Press, October 6, 1909.

“Brick Has Come,” Wellington Daily News, December 30, 1909.

“Masons Will Entertain,” The Monitor Press, October 5, 1910.

“Controversy Settled-Masonic Temple Co. and H L Buttrey at Last Agree and the Building will be Erected at Once,” Peoples Voice, October 7, 1909.

“Masonic House-Warming on Monday Evening,” The Monitor Press, October 12, 1910.

## **APPENDIX: A Sketch of Freemasonry**

Freemasonry (AKA Free and Accepted Masons) is considered to be one of the world’s oldest secular fraternal societies. There is evidence of an association of men who engaged in any one of the many crafts and trades connected with architectural construction. They were known as masons and existed by 926 AD preceding the time of Jesus Christ. The initial form of the builder’s association lasted approximately 400 years. They built hundreds of Gothic cathedrals in Western Europe and the Great British Isles. During the ‘Cathedral Age’ masons formed themselves into workman’s guilds. They nominated governing officers and established three levels of membership: apprentices, craftsmen and master masons. Each guild member was required to develop skill proficiencies in his trade in order to advance to the next higher level. In addition to obtaining advanced technical skills for advancement each member was taught and maintained prescribed attributes of moral conduct.

Members could move from place to place with the expectation of being excepted by a new guild as a skilled craftsman. Since there was no written or printed records, he could identify himself as a regular Mason in good standing by means of secret modes of identification which had been entrusted to him at the completion of his apprenticeship.

During the 17th century, the great cathedral building era ceased and therefore the great number of

skilled masons were no longer required. Membership began to dwindle and therefore the monies in the guild coffers and the masons' political influence also declined. In England during the Reformation they addressed this issue by admitting men of wealth and social status as members. They were known as 'accepted or speculative' masons. The guilds eventually evolved into a fraternal organization devoted to the ideals of fraternity, equality, and peace. Their primary role was now social with the 'craft/trade role' being secondary.

Local guilds joined with other area guilds to achieve greater effectiveness. J. T. Desaguliers united these guilds and lodges under one jurisdiction on June 14, 1717. Within six years it became known as the Grand Lodge of England. These governing members belonged to the 'mother' lodge and are considered the governing body for all other grand lodges. It is this ancient and august body that all regular lodges of the ancient craft trace today trace their origin. Later in the century, the York Rite body also joined the Grand Lodge at London.

Freemasonry came to the United States in 1733 through Henry Price in Boston, Massachusetts. Eventually, lodges were established in New York, and they established the current accepted standards. Four or more guilds were considered in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia. By the time of the American Revolution, approximately 150 lodges existed in 'Colonies' where they established themselves as and accepted adjuncts of civic responsibility. Many signers of the Constitution of the United States were masons. As the country pushed its' borders westwards the culture of America changed. The Masonic membership realized that societal needs were evolving and in order to survive, they too needed to change, or keep up with the times. They responded by maintaining the basic organizational unit known as the Blue Lodge or Craft Lodge and added ancillary organizations to meet the changing needs of the societies in which they existed.

As the United States grew so did the Masonic membership. They were now able to perform the elaborate ceremonies and institute a national structure. Different divisions within the Masonic organizational structure were established. Each had a slightly different mission statement. The York Rite, essentially of British inspiration, evolved from the Royal Arch Masons and Knights Templar with the later addition of the continental Royal and Select Masters. In 1798 Royal Arch Masons established a national organization, followed by the Knights Templar in 1814 and the Royal a Select Masters in 1871. The York Rite consists of 10 degrees including the three symbolic Degrees of the Blue Lodge.

Different Masonic legends and traditions evolved in France and elsewhere in Europe and eventually solidification into the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry. Bodies of these continental degrees were established as early as 1764 in New Orleans, Louisiana and 1767 in Albany, New York, and were formalized by the establishment of the First Supreme council in 1801 at Charleston, South Carolina. The Scottish Rite consists of 33 degrees including the three symbolic Degree of the Blue Lodge.

Previously stated, the organization expanded to meet changing societal needs. In 1855 the Eastern Star was established to meet the needs of women. These are independent organizations to which both men and women belong. They are associated with the Masonic Order by fraternal and family ties. By the late 1800's the Masons had substantial membership and functioned primarily to meet social needs and one of which was entertainment. The Shrine was established in 1872 to meet that specific need. The Masons also established youth groups for their member's children and later opened their membership to the community at large. The boys group is known as DeMolay and established in Kansas City in 1919 and Job's Daughters; the girls group was founded in Omaha in 1920.

The Masons are known for their charitable good works especially for children and the aged/infirm. For example in 1888 the members of the Mystic Shrine Morocco Temple assisted victims of yellow fever outbreak in Jacksonville, Florida. Temples all over the United States contributed to relief for victims of Johnstown, Pennsylvania flood of May 21, 1889. During the 1897 Imperial Council Session the Shrine began to take on other disasters. The first formal organization of Masonic charities came in 1919 when Noble Freeland Kendrick launched an idea that the Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine of North America should undertake, as an organization, to do something for orphaned and crippled children. At the 46th. Imperial Council Session at Portland, Oregon in 1920, Kendrick presented a resolution to establish a Shriners hospital for crippled children to be funded by an assessment of \$2.00 per capita upon the entire membership. In the years which followed, Imperial Potentates urged Shriners everywhere to carry on works of charity by challenging temples to develop local charities as well. (Deventor, 1996, p. 184).

**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The nominated property is located on block 67, lots 11 & 12 parcel number 069-156-14-0-30-18-006.00-0, Sec.-Twp.-Rng.: 14-32-01W on the northwest corner of Washington and Lincoln Avenues in Wellington, Kansas.

**Boundary Justification:**

The nominated property includes the building and property associated with the Masonic Lodge No. 150 AF & AM of Wellington, Kansas.