

# PROPOSED LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

## EASTERN ALCOVE – 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR - JEFFERSON MASONIC TEMPLE



“A library implies an act of faith, which generations still in darkness hid sign in their night in witness of the dawn.”

**Brethren:** With reference to the conceptual sketch presented on the easel on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the building beside the representation of Bro. George Washington, I would like to propose that, in my humble opinion, aside from our caring as brethren for the immediate well-being of our fellow Masons, their families, widows and orphans, and conducting the other business of the lodges, there is little we can contribute to the longest-term viability and perpetuation of Masonry and the tenets of Freemasonry in Illinois and beyond, than to establish a library at one of the two remaining Masonic Temples in the City of Chicago, Illinois. By ‘long-term’ I mean to say not decades but centuries. I say this with such a reverence not so much for books themselves, but for those eternally valuable fragments of wisdom, human and divine, accumulated in them over the last four millennia, no less. It is said with an eye on the quality and value of the extensive private library at the Masonic Temple in Evanston, Illinois. I think that books, the oldest and the best, will always be treasured well into the Digital Age.

I will venture to say with a tip of the hat to H.D. Thoreau, that the value of such a library, and of libraries in general, is so far above and beyond the common light of day as the stars are above and beyond the clouds. Or from the pen of Bro. Victor Hugo, the quotation at the top of this page speaks to the same issue and sentiment in a specifically Masonic context.

Masonry, having been passed into our hands from the hands of many of the most brilliant, ethical, compassionate, courageous and noble men of the Renaissance and post-Renaissance world, must be passed off to generations yet to come. And though the future may not so commonly utilize the printed word, books being more like living persons which can be held like a child to inform the senses of touch and smell as well as the mind and soul, nonetheless, permit us to extend a real and tangible hand from the past to Masons yet unborn so that they may also know what we have known and felt, but also that they may use and reuse, delight in and expand upon the benevolent benefit of books and the wisdom they preserve.

The plan calls for the construction of approximately 18 feet of book shelving extending from floor to ceiling in the alcove north of the porch entrance on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. A desk would be designed to fit the space below the window facing the porch and display cases would be designed at the corners as well as within 3-foot high cases and shelving designed to separate the library alcove from the sitting room area. Shelving and display cabinets would be equipped with glass doors for protection and appearance. Inscriptions sharing some of the most profound wisdom found in classical literature and documents can be inscribed at appropriate locations. Further educational interest may be imparted by the use of geometrical and mathematical concepts such as the ‘divine number,’ pi, and the Fibonacci sequence. Several lodges have preserved substantial libraries which are now inaccessible to their members lying in storage. The ‘Temple Board’ has discussed the possibility and would certainly be interested in hearing of your ideas & support. In friendship and Fraternity - Thank You. JM

**If you have ideas or are interested in donating time or materials**

### CONTACT US:

Russ Johnson, Secretary, King Oscar Lodge No. 855 ( [RusselleJohnson@juno.com](mailto:RusselleJohnson@juno.com) ) 847-966-2471

Jim McDermott, Jefferson Temple Association Board ( [Jim357@hotmail.com](mailto:Jim357@hotmail.com) ) 773-627-3462

**JEFFERSON MASONIC TEMPLE**  
5418 WEST GALE STREET, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS