

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **JUL 23 1985**
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Commencement Lodge No. 7, Knights of Pythias, Pythian Temple

and/or common Pythian Temple (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 924-926½ Broadway not for publication

city, town Tacoma vicinity of

state Washington code 053 county Pierce code 053

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>n/a</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: fraternal organization

4. Owner of Property

name Commencement Lodge No. 7, Knights of Pythias (attn: Joe Zini & Floyd Roland)

street & number 926½ Broadway

city, town Tacoma vicinity of state Washington 98402

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County-City Building

street & number 930 South Tacoma Avenue

city, town Tacoma state Washington 98402

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

(1) Washington State Inventory of Cultural Resources
title (2) Tacoma Cultural Resources Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records (1) Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation
(2) Tacoma Public Library, Main Branch Northwest Room
city, town (1) 111 W. 21st Ave., Olympia Washington 98504
(2) Tacoma state Washington 98402

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Pythian Temple was specifically designed for use as a fraternal lodge and meeting hall with commercial storefronts on the two street levels. The building is a classical masonry and timber frame structure with a facade detailed and finished in cut and dressed Tenino sandstone. Constructed on two sloping city lots, the building stands a full four stories at the highest elevation. The lodge exhibits architectural elements typical of the Italian Renaissance Style executed in the Second Renaissance Revival period. The major portion of the ornate primary facade on Broadway, the Court C exterior, and the major portion of the lodge interior and furnishings remain unaltered, well-maintained, and historically intact. Recent alterations to the Broadway storefront reflect a design typical of many commercial buildings from this period. The original classical entablature has been covered with simplified sheet metal which does not seriously detract from the building's historic character.

The lodge is located downtown in the central business district. Constructed on two city lots and situated on an east to west sloping half block, the lodge occupies a prime site. The site is bounded to the north and south by commercial businesses. To the east, it is bounded by Broadway Plaza (formerly C Street), which is bordered on the opposite side by razed, undeveloped property adjacent to the recently restored Pantages Center (National Register, 1976). To the west, the property is bounded by Court C (formerly Opera Alley), which is bordered on the opposite side by commercial businesses adjacent on the north to Clapp Law Center.

Constructed of masonry with a timber frame, the building rests on a concrete foundation. The core of the rectangular building occupies the entire 50 by 120 foot lots and encompasses approximately 6,000 square feet per floor. The entire four story structure is visible from Broadway. As the building steps up the slope, only three stories visibly front on Court C. Due to adjoining commercial businesses which were constructed in the early 1900's, two stories are evident from the north side and only the upper one story is noticeable from the south side.

The exterior elevations are brick masonry. Three sides are unaltered and retain the original brick finish. The north elevation has been painted several times with advertising typical of this period. The name "Pythian Temple" appears in one story height on the north side of the building. The roof configuration is flat at the fourth story C Street level, then rises approximately eight feet in elevation and is flat to the Broadway elevation parapet. Three rectangular 8 by 12 foot art glass skylights are covered by the elevated roof line. The skylights may have been covered due to leakage or World War II blackout restrictions.

The ornate primary elevation on Broadway represents a high point in the Italian Renaissance Style of the Second Renaissance Revival period (1883-1930). The facade is classically detailed and finished in cut and dressed Tenino sandstone. The base of the structure consists of storefronts and second floor offices and club room. Several storefront alterations have occurred. The original facade contained two storefronts. A semi-elliptical arch enhanced the center storefront. This arch and operational leaded prismatic glass transom lights above were covered in the 1920's with "modern" neon-lighted signage. In a later major revision, the two original storefronts were removed and a recessed single storefront with a broad, plaster covered fascia was constructed. In 1982, sensitive alterations restored the two storefronts with wood mullions to reflect

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a storefront typical of commercial buildings in the early twentieth century. The original Roman arch entry south of the storefront leads to lodge facilities on the upper three floors. The arch has alternating radiating voussoirs with voluted consoles on each side to support the cornice above. The sculptured bust of a knight-in-armor decorates the keystone of the arch.

The upper stories of the front facade are divided into three major bays. Two slightly projecting end bays form shallow pavilions which flank the wider central bay. The central bay, in turn, features three regularly spaced arched openings at each story. The second floor offices and club room are divided into five bays with segmented, flat arch, one-over-one rectangular windows resting on a string course. A small neon sign displaying "Pythian Temple FCB" projects from the center arch. A second string course between the second and third floors separates the upper facade from the base of the building.

The monumental third and fourth stories are the focal point of the Broadway elevation. Flanked by the end pavilions, the recessed central bay is divided by four engaged columns which rise the full two stories from pedestals and are crowned by Composite capitals. Major attention is given to the third story. The central arched opening in the center bay is lighted by a double-hung round headed sash window. The other two arched openings form niches for the statues of Damon and Pythias. The only evidence that statues may have been placed in the niches appears in a newspaper article concerning the building's dedication. Garlands decorate the spandrels above the three central arches. The arches of the flanking pavilions are glazed with double-hung sash windows. The arches are framed with pilasters and capped with entablatures and projecting triangular pediments.

A simplified fourth floor culminates the height of the building. One-over-one rectangular double-hung windows are inset below a decorative frieze. The original classical entablature was covered with a simplified sheet metal entablature, possibly due to earthquake damage and subsequent city code requirements. The balustraded parapet, cornice with modillions, frieze with the inscription "Pythian Temple," and architrave are covered with the sheet metal. A sculptured bust of a knight-in-armor, an emblemed shield, and a 30 foot flag pole originally extended above the center of the balustrade.

Of the two pronounced sides, the west facade is secondary and unadorned. This elevation is unaltered and has remained intact since 1907. The two storefronts on the Court C street level occupy one-half of the second floor. The display windows in each of the two divided bays feature a paneled wood base, wood trim, and transom above. The second level (third floor) is divided into six bays. Each bay contains a rectangular, one-over-one window sash. There are seven windows on the third level (fourth floor), five are one-over-one rectangular windows with a single light transom above which opens into the banquet hall. Each window is capped with a segmental arch and rests on a stone sill. The original fire escape traverses down the center of the facade. The lodge entrance on the west facade leads into a long hall which extends to the club room, library, and office on the second floor.

The temple's main entrance on Broadway opens into a vestibule which leads to the lodge's meeting areas. Entry is through two sets of doors. The double, solid wood, exterior doors are adorned with curved polished chrome handles which meet when closed. These

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doors were not included in the original plan, but were added at a later point in time. The vestibule is adorned with a mosaic tile floor surrounded by marble wainscoting. An emblem of a knight and a triangle with the letters FBC inset in blue, yellow, and red tiles embellishes the white mosaic floor. The floor is bordered by black and white tiles executed in a fret pattern. Above the marble wainscoting on the north wall, a painted sign reads "Commencement Lodge No. 7 Knights of Pythias, FBC, Instituted September 6, 1881." Beyond the second wood and glass double doors, the mosaic tile continues to the first riser of the painted wood stairs which ascend to the second floor.

Two chair lifts were installed in the 1950's as an alternative to installation of an elevator. The chair lifts ascend against the south wall of the wide stairwells and are located on the second to third and third to fourth flights of stairs.

Interiors of the second, third, and fourth floors were designed to accommodate a variety of uses including two ceremonial halls, a banquet hall and kitchen, ladies parlor, club room, men's smoking room, secretary's office, four office rentals, and two commercial spaces. The Court C street level on the second floor has always been used as rental space for various businesses and organizations. During the early years of the building's use, four offices with individual reception rooms filled the second floor level in the area now used as a club room. The original concept provided for conversion of the smaller lodge room to facilities for a club room. However, growth in membership necessitated deletion of the rental office space and conversion to club room facilities. The lodge currently retains one-half of the second floor for a club room, office, and library. Paint, linoleum, and asbestos or vinyl tiles are in keeping with the original. The club room retains its primary recreational use. Two pool tables and a billiard table with score rack, line, and spools occupy a large portion of the room. Four raised bay window seats with vinyl covers are inset below each window. Historical photographs of Knights of Pythias events and regalia add to the adornment. Incorporated in the club room is one of the original rental offices and reception rooms which are currently used as the club office and library. At an earlier point in time, the club office served as a refreshment area. An early twentieth century National cash register sits on its designated counter shelf. A reader board indicates the club's monthly activities and meetings. The adjacent library/reading room contains glassfront bookshelves, table, and chairs. A rectangular one-over-one window looks out onto Broadway Plaza.

Several public lavatories are situated on various levels of the building. All retain the original fixtures, porcelain sinks, marble partitions, and tile or wood floors that were installed in 1907 and 1914.

The major functions of the lodge occur on the third and fourth floors. The main lodge room, Castle Hall, is the focal point of the interior of the building. It exemplifies the architect's skill and talented work. A vestibule divides the hall and ante room into the main lodge. The vestibule is separated by two sets of double, paneled wood pocket doors. Beyond the ante room is a locker room with 24 built-in lockers where regalia for initiations and ceremonies is stored.

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Entrance into the Castle Hall for the first time is an overwhelming experience. Virtually every detail is as it was when the building was dedicated in 1907. The hall measures 37 by 68 feet. It is 35 feet high with an elliptically-vaulted ceiling surrounded by artistic murals on molded plaster depicting the story of Damon and Pythias. Overhead, semi-circular, perforated ornamental mouldings separate the three equidistantly placed 8 by 12 foot elliptical leaded art glass skylights. When the lodge was dedicated, the Daily Ledger remarked that the skylights "lend a charm and cast a spell to the richly furnished interior as the golden sun of the afternoon steals softly through." Light through the skylights has been eliminated by the built-up roof covering. The decorative element of the skylights, however, lends to the grandeur of the room. The hall is illuminated by three clustered, global chandeliers hanging from the ceiling and global fixtures protruding from the balcony and walls around the hall.

Around the perimeter of the hall are three stations with elaborately carved mahogany chairs and rostrums. The station in the west rests on a raised platform. Wood paneling surrounds three sides of the hall. Fluted pilasters with Corinthian capitals extend upward to the decorated cornice above the balcony. On either side of the pilasters abutting the three stations are large, ornamental plastered brackets constructed in pairs. The pilasters and brackets were originally painted to simulate wood. Sometime after 1925, the pilasters were painted white. The balcony above is supported by the brackets and projects over the gallery floor around three sides of the hall.

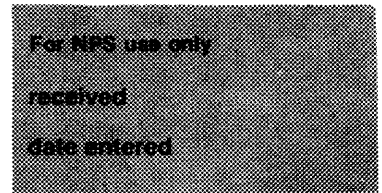
At the west end of the lodge hall, a semi-circular organ loft extends beyond the balcony. Carved wooden pipes extend above the organ to simulate the appearance of a pipe organ. On either side of the organ are single, wood-paneled doors leading into a vestibule on the fourth floor, a projector room, and the stairwell to the gallery below. Inside the projector room, an early twentieth century projector is used to project glass lantern images onto a screen behind the stage of the east rostrum. The balustraded balcony employs alternating sections of solid wood panels and panels of radiating wood strips. Plastered walls behind the balcony were designed for murals of scenes from around the state. Instead, lettering inscribed on decorative panels has been placed on the walls to illustrate the lessons of the order.

At the east end of the hall, rising two stories in height, a convex elliptical rostrum rests on a wide, elevated platform. The chancellor and officers of the lodge preside over meetings from this station. A massive carved mahogany station capped with a pediment is flanked on either side with leather-backed seats. Above each station is a designated red, blue, or yellow global light. Two richly carved mahogany desks are placed on either side of the platform. Paneled mahogany wainscoting surrounds the stations and supports ten Ionic columns in nearly full relief. Scenic murals fill the spaces between the columns to form a diorama. A decorative cornice extends around the elliptical curve and rests on the columns and supporting pilasters.

A second, smaller lodge room is located behind Castle Hall and serves as a meeting room for auxiliary orders. Measuring 25 by 41 feet, the highlighted details of the room are the geometric pattern of the oak floor, picture moulding, and paneled doors. A raised rostrum extends across the north end of the room. The 14 foot ceiling has been lowered and covers the original wooden beams and decorative cornice. At the eastern end of the

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third floor, a small room has served as a ladies' parlor and is elegantly furnished with sofa and chairs of the period. A secretary's office fills a niche behind the elliptical rostrum.

A banquet hall and kitchen occupy the west end of the fourth floor behind Castle Hall. Kitchen renovations have been modest and the facility is functionally austere. Glassed-in cupboards align one wall. The banquet hall contains the original chairs that were purchased in 1907. A simplified fireplace with brick hearth and facing surrounded by paneled wood and paneled stack is the focal point of the room. Plastered wainscoting divided by vertical wood strips forms a base for the dish shelf that surrounds the room. Pedimented doors and beamed ceiling add to the architectural design of the banquet hall. A men's smoking room adjoins the balcony level of Castle Hall at the east end of the fourth floor.

The significant architectural fabric of the building, the artistic murals, and the interior decor and furnishings of the Pythian Temple remain essentially unaltered, well-maintained, and historically intact.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates	1906-1907	Builder/Architect	Frederick Heath, architect Cowan and Black, contractors
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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Pythian Temple is significant as one of Tacoma's finest examples of Second Renaissance Revival architecture. It exemplifies the importance, influence, and contributions of fraternal organizations within the community throughout Tacoma's development. Designed by prominent local architect Frederick Heath, the building was constructed by the Knights of Pythias Commencement Lodge No. 7 in 1906-07. Since its dedication, the Pythian Temple has been in continuous use as Commencement Lodge's meeting hall. The building, which includes some of the most significant interiors in the city, is one of the best preserved architectural examples demonstrating the apex reached by fraternal organizations in Tacoma during the city's early years of growth.

Historical Background

Fraternal organizations played an important role in the formation of ideologies and societal values as America changed from an agrarian society to an industrialized society and expanded in the quest of manifest destiny. One of the major fraternal organizations during this period was the Order of the Knights of Pythias. It was instituted in Washington, D.C., on February 19, 1864. Rising amid the destructive Civil War, its founders believed that the principles of Pythianism would help heal the hatred that was tearing our great nation apart. This new fraternal order sought to build friendships through loyalty and truth, to support and teach patriotism, to impart the teachings of the Bible through its ritual, and to extend charity and benevolence to those in need. When President Lincoln was advised of the contents of the Knights of Pythias' ritual, he supported the organization's founding by saying:

"If we could but bring its spirit to all our citizenry, what a wonderful thing it would be....It is one of the best agencies conceived for upholding of government, honoring the flag, for re-uniting of our brethern of the North and of the South, for teaching the people to love one another, and portraying the sanctity of the home and loved ones. I would suggest...that you go to the Congress of the United States and ask for a charter and so organize on a great scale throughout this nation and disseminate this wonderful work."

The Order of the Knights of Pythias became the first American fraternal organization chartered by an act of the United States Congress.

On the evening of February 15, 1864, five men met in Washington, D.C., to discuss the formation of a new fraternal order. Justus Henry Rathbone invited four members of the Arion Glee Club to hear the reading of a ritual he had written which was based on the devoted friendship between Damon and Pythias, members of the Pythagorean Brotherhood of ancient Greece. Robert Allen Champion, William Henry Burnett, David L. Burnett, and Edward Sullivan Kimball, like Rathbone, were all government clerks serving in the War and Treasury Departments. That evening, the men pledged their obligation to Rathbone's ritual. Four days later, with 13 members, Washington Lodge No. 1 of the Order of Knights of Pythias was founded.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Brief History of the Order of Knights of Pythias. comp. Supreme Lodge Extension and Educational Commission. Pamphlet. n.d.
Carnahan, James R. Pythian Knighthood: Its History and Literature. Cincinnati: Pettibone, 1890.

(continued)

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Tacoma North

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	0	5	4	2	4	0	0	5	2	3	3	4	2	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification Lots 11 and 12, Block 906, New Tacoma, Washington Territory, filed for record in the Office of the County Auditor, Pierce County on February 3, 1875.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state n/a code county code

state n/a code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Judith Kipp

organization The Kipp Associates date January 20, 1982

street & number 56 East Road N. telephone (206) 752-4277

city or town Tacoma state Washington 98406

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Jacob E. Mon

title State Historic Preservation Officer date June 19, 1985

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register

date 8/23/85

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Justus Rathbone, founder of the order, first heard the story of Damon and Pythias in 1858 while teaching school in Eagle Harbor, Michigan. To fill the empty hours of the evening, Rathbone directed an amateur dramatics group. One of the plays performed by this group was Irish playwright John Banim's Damon and Pythias. Banim's play was first introduced in London in 1821.

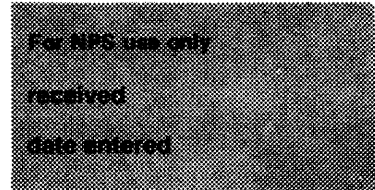
The story of Damon and Pythias (Phintias) was first recorded by Aristoxenus in the fourth century B.C. The oldest version still in existence was written by Cicero in the first century B.C. In Banim's play, Damon is a senator and Pythias is a soldier. Sometime around 400 B.C., as members of the Pythagorean Brotherhood, Damon and Pythias each pledged his life to prevent the other from dying. The story of Damon and Pythias recalls Pythagoras' teachings of strict morality, absolute truthfulness, honor, and integrity. Justus Rathbone based the new order on Pythagoras' teachings and wrote the ritual for an American society predicated on this brotherhood of man as expressed in the story of Damon and Pythias. The triangle of the Pythian structure symbolized the values of friendship, charity, and benevolence.

Two months after Washington Lodge No. 1 was founded, Rathbone resigned over a dispute about the direction the order was taking. During the first few months, four additional lodges were formed in the area around Washington, D.C. By June 1865, only Franklin Lodge No. 2 remained in existence. Rathbone was called on to re-establish his membership. Under his direction, the ritual was rewritten, symbols were established, and the structure of the order was reorganized. The Order of the Knights of Pythias began to grow. By 1868, there were 3,000 members; a grand lodge and a supreme lodge had been formed. Over the years, auxiliaries were created--the Insurance Department, 1877; the Military Department of the Uniformed Rank, 1878; the Pythian Sister, 1888; the Dramatic Order of Knights of Khorassan, 1914; the Junior Order of Princes of Syracuse, 1927; and the Sunshine Girls. Rathbone's background as a teacher, director of plays, musician and composer, and clerk in the War Department undoubtedly influenced the ritual as a means of teaching, the presentation of plays as a method of learning, the use of the piano and organ in ritual work as a musical expression, and the Uniformed Rank as a military experience. At the height of its growth (1927), the Knights of Pythias' national membership was in excess of 857,800. Since the organization's founding in 1864, more than two and one-half million men have joined the order.

The growth of the Knights of Pythias paralleled American expansion after the Civil War. As wagon trains and railroads crossed the plains of the North American continent, new towns formed, territories grew, and new states entered the Union. In 1865, when Justus Rathbone was reorganizing a new fraternal society, Job Carr entered Puget Sound and, with his sons Howard and Anthony, established the first permanent white settlement on land above Commencement Bay which would later be named Tacoma. The 1880 federal census of Washington Territory recorded a population of 1,098 in the communities of Old and New Tacoma. Industrialization reached out to Tacoma as it was designated the terminus for the Northern Pacific Railroad. An influx of new arrivals came seeking potential prosperity in the opportunities that a boom town offered.

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In new towns across the nation, the growing need for community, fraternity, and social activity brought together like-minded individuals with diverse backgrounds. These needs also impacted older towns and cities as family members, seeking distant opportunities, left a void in established households. In both new and old towns, people sought to re-establish a sense of community in a fragmented society. Fraternal organizations became an important part of the social fabric in developing cities and towns throughout the country. The Knights of Pythias offered the type of loyalty and friendship, a sense of identity and sameness, that nurtures growth and development. Sometimes referred to as "insurance" societies, the Knights provided members with aid and paid weekly benefits in the event of sickness; they made arrangements and paid funeral benefits upon a member's death. These were important benefits for individuals who were isolated from their family group. Although stressing moral, religious, and patriotic values, the celebration of social activities and comradery added an additional uplifting and satisfying purpose to membership in the Knights of Pythias.

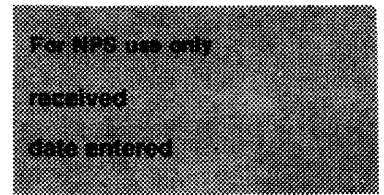
Commencement Lodge No. 7

When residents of New Tacoma and Old Tacoma organized in 1881 to establish a Pythian brotherhood in their communities, national membership reached 110,903 and lodges were scattered across the United States, extended into Canada and the Island of Hawaii. Between 1880 and 1882, 20,000 new members were recruited. James B. Carnahan referred to this period as the Pythian "revival" in his book Pythian Knighthood. The need to establish a new fraternal organization in Tacoma arose when Tacoma began to grow at a rapid rate in anticipation of the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad. Leaders from both Old and New Tacoma organized in the summer of 1881 to establish a Pythian lodge in their community. Three founding members and organizers of the new lodge were Knights from other Pythian lodges--E.O. Fulmer and H.A. Bigelow belonged to Harmony Lodge No. 5 in Seattle and George J. Farley had been a member in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The dispensation was granted by the Supreme Lodge on September 6, 1881. A grand celebration in this small town of wooden buildings and rough dirt roads followed. At 5:00 on the evening of October 30, 1881, the steamer Josephine pulled up to the New Tacoma Dock with 32 members from Seattle Lodge No. 5 aboard. They were met by the Tacoma Cornet Band and Tacoma's 61 charter members. Together they marched in a parade up the hill to the large and elegantly furnished new Pythian hall at 1015 Pacific Avenue which they had rented from A.J. Baker. Their meeting hall was located next door to the new Alpha Opera House. The initiation ceremonies continued for 13 hours, with a midnight supper break held in the decorated rooms of the Halstead House.

On that evening in October 1881, Commencement Lodge No. 7 was formed. Its new officers and Board of Trustees included H.A. Bigelow, George J. Farley, E.O. Fulmer, G.W. Martin, Stephen D. Baker, Charles Sprague, George W. Mattice, G.N. Talcott, A.A. Christie, Robert Thompson, George Bachman, and W.B. Kelley. The membership was impressive yet diverse. Clerks, carpenters, printers, machinists, blacksmiths, and moulders were among those attracted to the new order. Prominent among the charter members were Howard and Anthony B. Carr, Tacoma's first settlers; W.P. Bonney, who would later write three volumes on the History of Pierce County, Washington; Charles B. Halstead, owner of the Halstead House; E.O. Fulmer, who was elected New Tacoma's first City Marshall; and James H. Junette, whose membership in the Commencement Lodge would span almost 50 years.

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He reached the rank of Major General of the Uniform Rank and played an active role in most of the major issues and accomplishments of the lodge during that time. From its inception, Commencement Lodge has been well organized and well managed. The order's financial well-being and longevity can be attributed to the continuous succession of strong, intelligent, and dedicated individuals who personify the principles of Pythianism.

Five additional lodges formed in Tacoma between 1886 and 1912 as Tacoma's population swelled. The Knights of Pythias attracted John S. Baker, one of Tacoma's major contributory entrepreneurs; William J. Fife, responsible for establishing the Tacoma Guard and Executive Officer for the Washington Regiment; prominent merchants and grocers A.J. Rhodes, Morris Gross, and Charles T. Uhlman; A.V. Fawcett, Mayor of Tacoma; noted photographer Marvin Boland; Alfred Lister, City Controller and President of Tacoma Savings and Loan; Sidney A. (Sam) Perkins, newspaper publisher; and architect Frederick Heath. Over the years, the strength and significance of Commencement Lodge sustained while the five neighboring Tacoma lodges disbursed and consolidated with Commencement Lodge.

From its beginning, the Knights of Pythias Commencement Lodge No. 7 has been dedicated to caring for its members and responding to the needs of its community. Throughout the 103 years of its history, the minute books of the lodge convey these concerns. These years have been expended in caring for members in illness, handling funeral arrangements for deceased members, aiding widows and orphans of former fellow lodge members, sending funds and supplies in time of major disasters, responding to the needs of the unemployed and homeless during the Depressions of the 1890's and 1930's. Today the lodge continues to support a home for aged Knights in Vancouver, Washington; maintain a blood bank for those in need; sponsor Little League youth groups; and provide medical equipment for the disabled.

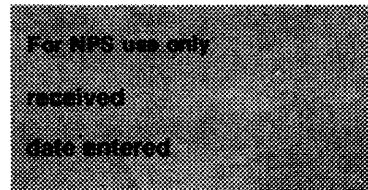
The history of Commencement Lodge No. 7 tells of fulfilling the social needs of the community and bringing enjoyment as well as aid to fellow members and their families. The Knights have rented halls and facilities for dinners, dances, and picnics to celebrate holidays and Pythian anniversaries. They have put on plays and held debates. Before radio, motion pictures, and television, fraternal organizations served as forms of entertainment and social interaction for their members and their communities.

Construction of the Temple

Dedication, sound planning, and responsive action by the officers and members of Commencement Lodge led to the organization's growth and longevity. Foresight and sound judgement by the founding members of Commencement Lodge prompted them to purchase land for a future lodge building. In 1882, Theodore Hosmer, mayor of New Tacoma (who had arrived in 1873 to lay out a new city for the Northern Pacific Railroad), offered the Knights a choice piece of land on C Street (now Broadway) between the Court House and the Ledger building. This site later received national recognition as crowds gathered to celebrate George Francis Train's departure from the steps of the Ledger building in 1890 on his 67-day trip around the world. Purchasing the two lots for \$1,200, member P.C. Kelley assured his fellow Knights that they were getting "a good bargain." Rather than

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build a new lodge at that time, they constructed a wood frame structure which they leased out to various businesses. The Knights continued to rent A.J. Baker's building at 1015 Pacific Avenue for their meeting hall.

During the next 25 years, lodge meetings were held in halls located in the Quimette Block at 11th and Pacific Avenues, the Odd Fellows Hall in the Mason Block at 10th and A Streets, and the Old Court House at 920 C Street. After considerable repairs to their building on C Street and problems securing satisfactory tenants during the 1890's Depression years, the Knights agreed in 1906 that it was time to build their own magnificent Pythian Temple.

By 1906, Commencement Lodge had built up a sizeable treasury. Its membership had steadily increased and the property on C Street proved to be a valuable investment. C Street had become a bustling thoroughfare flanked by theaters and commercial businesses. The imposing, rusticated stone and brick Tacoma Theater building stood on the adjacent corner of 9th and C Streets, and the Masonic Lodge had recently completed an impressive classical structure in the next block on St. Helens Street (now demolished). As a major fraternal organization in Tacoma, a significant building exemplifying the Knights of Pythias' important role in the community justified the monumental decision by officers and members of Commencement Lodge to undertake the project for construction of the most beautiful Castle Hall in the West.

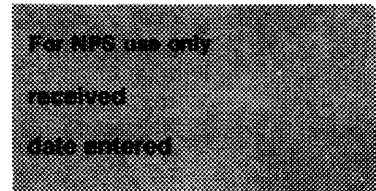
The Knights hired noted architect Frederick Heath to prepare plans for a four story building. When bids were opened, Cowan and Blacks' lowest bid of \$37,562 was considered too high. Heath modified the plans and a contract for \$32,106 was accepted. The Knights considered issuing \$30,000 in stock certificates to finance the project; however, the stock plan proved unfeasible. A first mortgage for \$30,000 was secured from Tacoma Cemetery; a second mortgage for \$12,000 from Pacific National Bank was required as Cowan and Black's bid did not include plumbing, heating, electric wiring, hardware, or glass.

When the cornerstone was laid on July 30, 1906, an impressive ceremony conducted by Governor Albert E. Mead (a member of the Order of the Knights of Pythias) attracted several hundred people. Board of Trustee members Ben Haverkamp, George W. Race, and J.M. Hayes; Advisory Board Members Henry Moore, Orno Strong, and E.E. White; and Chancellors G.W. Russell and H.C. Koons were responsible for bringing together the formation of the building project and supervising the execution of the construction. Construction progressed considerably well with relatively few delays or conflicts. As the building neared completion, splendid furnishings were purchased down to the minute detail of tableware and dishes from Germany. Furniture was selectively ordered from C.E. Horton and Pacific Parlor Furniture Companies. No expense was spared.

The Knights commissioned mural artist Carl Reyna to paint the walls above the upper gallery and the stage wall in Castle Hall depicting the story of Damon and Pythias. He was paid \$35 per mural--a total of \$450. Reyna's murals are one of the most significant features of the building, secondary only to the architectural detail. The rarity of these surviving murals makes a strong artistic statement. They stand as a reminder to the decorative artistic expression used in buildings of the period. Little is know about

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Carl Reyna. He was born in Hanover, Germany, and came to Tacoma in 1907. He established a scenery painting business with Richard J. Allen which soon dissolved in 1909. Reyna was also commissioned as scenery painter for the Star Theater in Tacoma. He joined Commencement Lodge during the execution of the Castle Hall murals. Although it appears from city directories that Reyna left Tacoma in 1911, he remained a member of the lodge until 1933, at which time he transferred to Burlingame, California.

Approximately \$45,000 had been expended when dedication ceremonies were celebrated on May 21, 1907--\$39,500 for the building and approximately \$5,500 for furnishings. The "good bargain" the Knights had made in 1882 was realized. The value of the land alone had reportedly increased to \$45,000 by 1906.

The dedication ceremonies became the focus for the 24th annual convention of Washington's Grand Lodge. Two thousand members from across the state arrived for the three day convention to help celebrate the dedication of the finest Castle Hall in the Northwest. On the first day of the convention, a large parade marched through the downtown business district to Wright Park where competitive drills were performed by the Uniformed Ranks from Seattle, Spokane, and Snohomish lodges. That evening, 1,200 members gathered in the Castle Hall to dedicate Commencement Lodge's grand new building. Charter members John Forbes, J.H. Junette, E.O. Fulmer, and A.A. Christie participated in the ceremonies. In his dedication address, Governor Mead paid tribute to architect Frederick Heath in saying, "If there was a statute upon the books of this state, I would appoint him who has planned this castle hall so well architect for the state of Washington."

Architect Frederick Heath

The architect for the new lodge, Frederick Heath, specialized in the design of schools, churches, commercial buildings, and residences. He was one of the most prolific architects in Washington State and has been credited with designing more than 600 structures in the Northwest. Frederick Heath was born in 1861 in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. His family moved to Caledonia, Minnesota, where Frederick attended public schools and Powell's Academy. He was an ambitious, hard working young man. At the age of 13, he went to work setting type for a printer in the small country town. In 1881, after seven years of printing experience, Heath set out for the big city of Minneapolis with the ambition of establishing his own large printing office. Unable to find work in his apprenticed profession, Heath supported himself for the next two years as a painter and carpenter. In 1883, he landed a job with architect Warren H. Hayes. Minneapolis was just entering its greatest period of growth. Heath worked for Hayes during the next ten years, advancing from office boy to chief draftsman. Although Heath never sought a formal education in architecture, he pursued the field assiduously by buying and reading as many books on the theory and practice of architecture as he could afford. He gained experience in Hayes' office by working on commercial and residential buildings in Minneapolis and St. Paul, churches in many states, and leading schools and colleges across the country.

The business of building was inherited by Heath. His father, William Heath, and brother, Charles, achieved prominence in Tacoma as builders. William Heath moved to Tacoma in 1889. In 1893, Frederick and his wife Mabel, followed the Minneapolis to Tacoma path

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that so many others followed. They arrived in Tacoma as the Depression of 1893 struck the nation. Employment as an architect was hard to find. Heath opened his own architectural practice in 1901 when the effects of the Depression dissipated. His first large commission in 1903 brought him instant prominence and recognition as an outstanding architect. He was hired by the Tacoma Board of Education to design a high school overlooking Commencement Bay on the charred ruins of the Tacoma Land Company's Tourist Hotel. With only foundation and walls intact, Heath restored the original architectural concept of the building to serve the needs of a new Tacoma high school. The overwhelming satisfaction of the school board led to a permanent assignment for Heath as architect for the Tacoma Board of Education for many years. In addition to Stadium High School (Stadium-Seminary Historic District, National Register, 1977), Heath is noted for the design of Stadium Bowl, Lincoln High School, and Central School.

Among the existing large scale buildings in Tacoma designed by Heath are the National Realty Building, the Stone-Fisher Building, The Rhodes Brothers Department Store Building, and the Tacoma Grocery Company Building (Union Depot/Warehouse Historic District, National Register, 1980). Other projects credited to Heath include the Federal Penitentiary at McNeil Island, the Communications Building on the University of Washington campus, the Masonic Temple in Yakima, the First Church of Christ Scientist, the First Lutheran Church, the First Baptist Church, the Tacoma General Hospital, and the Ansonia Apartments in Tacoma.

In 1911, Heath formed a partnership with George Gove. In 1914, they hired Herbert Bell and the firm later became known as Heath, Gove, and Bell. Heath continued to work at his profession as an architect with relentless enthusiasm and energy. On April 15, 1951, Heath's 90th birthday, the Tacoma News Tribune paid tribute to his productive life:

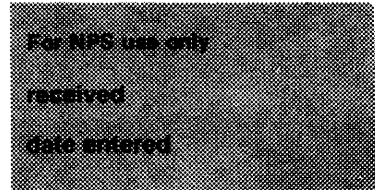
"When a person has lived 90 full, busy years; when he can still go to the office every working day, passing en route monumental landmarks of his own creation; when he can think and speak clearly, tell a story, enjoy a chuckle and plan technical projects to occupy him until he's 100--that man has cause to celebrate."

Frederick Heath died in March 1953, shortly before the advent of his 92nd birthday. During his lifetime he was responsible for pioneering the construction of Stadium Bowl, a 32,000 seat amphitheater and one of the largest outdoor theaters in the world in 1910; for designing a Masonic Temple patterned after King Solomon's Temple and claimed to have the most elaborate room in the Egyptian Style in the world; and for designing the tallest building west of the Mississippi when the National Realty Building was erected in 1911.

Heath also led an active role in the community. He served as a member and president of the Tacoma Parks Board for many years. He was a member of the Commercial Club of Tacoma. He became affiliated with the fraternal order of Masons and entered the Scottish Rite where he advanced to the high rank of 32nd degree Mason. In May 1907, when the construction of the Pythian Temple neared completion, Heath was elected a member and initiated into Commencement Lodge. He generously donated \$500, a large portion of his \$1,975 fee for designing the building, to the lodge after the building was completed.

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Heath's design for the primary facade of the Pythian Temple is among the finest examples of the Second Renaissance Revival Style in Tacoma. But, in addition to the significant facade, the Pythian Temple is distinguished by one of the most beautiful Castle Halls in the nation, and one of the outstanding interior spaces in the city. The artistic murals are a rare reminder of the decorative expression executed by scenic artists of the period. The grandeur and details of the interior ceremonial spaces were rarely executed in similar structures. The superb preservation of these spaces and the continuous use as Commencement Lodge's meeting hall serves as a tribute to the genius of the architect and the dedication of the lodge members. The history and beauty of this outstanding building and the important role and contributions of Commencement Lodge No. 7 to Tacoma's history make it one of the most important landmarks in the city.

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