

# WILLIAM A. POLAND

1852 - 1935



William A. Poland was born in Hightstown, NJ in 1852, and seven years later his family moved to Trenton. He attended Trenton public schools and he was a student at the Israel Howe Boys' Academy on West State Street. He graduated from the Franklin Institute of Philadelphia. Poland's work as an architect began in the leading

Philadelphia architect firm of James B. Sims and T. Roney Williamson and that was followed by working for Potter and Robinson in New York. In 1881 he moved back to Trenton.

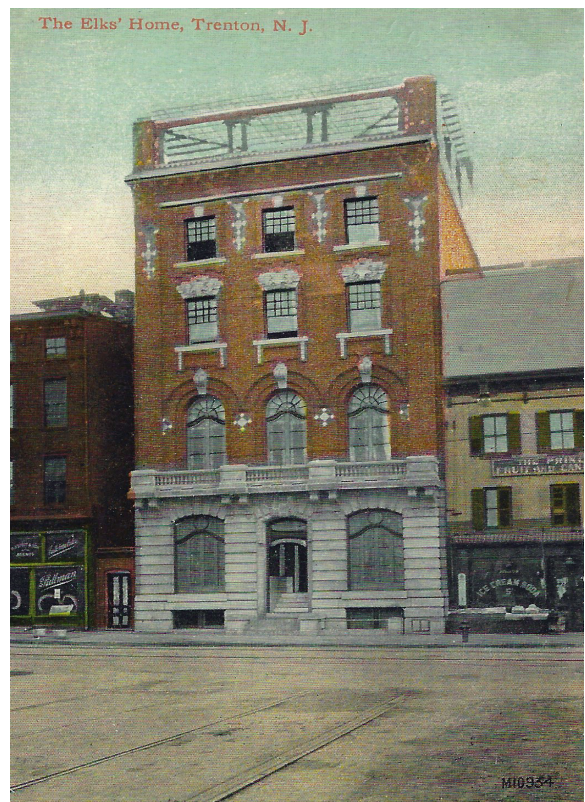
Poland would design well over 2,000 buildings in and around Trenton during his long career. Besides Junior No. 1, he designed the 2nd Masonic Temple, the Broad Street Bank Building and addition, the Trenton Elks Lodge No. 105, the Forst and Richey Building, the YMCA on the second block of East State Street, the Club House for Sacred Heart Church, Mill 1, Turner Hall, the Manze Hotel, Cook School, Mechanic's National Bank, and Bordentown Town Hall, just to name a few.

Among the churches built after his plans: St. Stephen's on Genesee Street, Calvary Baptist, St. Joachim's on Bayard Street, and the German Lutheran Church on South Broad.

Among the banks: the Princeton Bank, the Bordentown Bank, and the Farmers National Bank, Allentown.



*Broad Street Bank Building, 1899 designed by Poland*



*Trenton Elks Lodge No. 105, 1913 designed by Poland*





*Trenton YMCA, 1892 designed by Poland*



*Farmers National Bank Building, Allentown designed by William A. Poland, 1905*



## Poland and Trenton Schools

In 1911 Poland was elected to the new business manager position by the Trenton School Commission, at the re-organization of that body.

The duties of the business manager included the care of all school buildings and the charge of all school property. Plans and specifications for the erection or improvement of buildings were to be drawn by him or under his supervision. All materials, supplies would be inspected by him and he would supervise all work done under contract.

In 1914 Poland designed the plans for Junior No. 1, one of the first junior high schools to be constructed in the east. The school was of Gothic design with an attached industrial looking structure at the back for the shops.



*Junior No. 1, designed by Poland*

In 1920, an addition to the Jefferson School was designed by William A. Poland. Poland's office was also responsible for supervising the construction. While still under construction, the addition collapses. The special investigating commission appointed by the Board asserted that inferior workmanship on the part of the contractor, lack of proper inspection, and plans not sufficiently clear on the part of the architect, were responsible for the collapse.

A year later in 1921, The Board of Education abolishes William A. Poland's position of Business Manager, which he held for ten years. However, a new position for Poland was created, Superintendent of Buildings. His new duties would be the supervision of repairs to buildings erected and the maintenance of existing school property. Poland would not in any way be connected with the construction of new buildings. Draw-



ings of plans and supervision of new buildings would be in the hands of a chief architect, who would work with three assistants and a consulting architect.

In 1923 Russell T. Backus was named to replace Poland as superintendent of the Department of Buildings and Grounds at a salary of \$4,000. Poland was named as architect for repairs. He would make all blueprints and drawings of school buildings and properties, and make inventories of the value of grounds, buildings and other property. Work that had long been needed.

Also in 1923, William A. Poland was elected president of the newly formed Trenton Architect's Society. The society will take up the matter of revised building codes and also take an interest in the development and education of young draughts men.

In 1926 Poland is the Supervising Architect for the construction of Junior No. 4.



*Junior No. 4, Poland was the Supervising Architect for its Construction*

In 1932 expert consultants recommended tax savings for the School Board. They suggested the elimination of the Architect for Repairs position, which was held by Poland at a salary of \$3,500. The School Board decides not to eliminate Poland's position.

In October 1935 Poland dies at his Woodside home at the age of 83. He had been confined to his home since the middle of August, suffering from a heart ailment.

Poland had worked for the School Board for 22 years. The position of School Architect is abolished on December 6, 1935, only after Poland's death.



*Poland's Grave and Family Plot, Riverview Cemetery, Trenton*

## **The Second Masonic Temple**

February 7, 1884 Trenton Evening Times

The Trenton Mason's Board of Directors chose Poland's design not so much on account of the superiority of his design as a work of art, but because the style of architecture was considered by the Board to be the most suitable for the purposes for which it was intended. His drawings showed a magnificent building that would revolutionize the appearance of Warren and State Streets.



*Second Masonic Temple, designed by Poland*



## The Plans in Detail

The style of the Temple would be modernized Romanesque, and the details would be classical throughout. The height from ground to roof was eighty-two feet, and the plan would cover sixty-four feet on Warren Street with 163 feet on State Street. There would be five stories, including one in the roof, at the corner of streets and four stories of the Temple along State Street. The extra story would be made up by a double line of offices at the second floor, each line being twelve feet high, while the height of the Assembly room would be fourteen feet. The Assembly room in the second story would be 60 x 110 feet, and there would be a gallery. The third story would be used partly for lodge rooms, of which there would be two, each 30 x 63 feet, committee rooms, etc., and toward the State Street end a space 60 x 65 feet was to remain without a special purpose.

The fourth floor in the pitched roof was used as a banquet hall, with a length of 65 x 40 feet, and a height of 17 feet. There was also space reserved for janitor's rooms, storerooms, etc.

## A Beautiful Structure



*Second Masonic Temple (left hand corner), designed by Poland*

The material used in the building was granite on the first story and Trenton pressed brick elsewhere. The sills, lintels, etc., were brown stone, and there were terra cotta ornamentals. The turrets on the roof were made out of terra cotta. Two fine broad entrances would lead to the upper stories. One would be at the State Street end of the structure and the other midway on Warren Street. The doors had iron grills. Over the Warren Street entrance at the second story there was a finely cut stone bay. A polished granite column support the turret at the corner.

The roof was of slate, finished with galvanized iron and four finials on the main portion of the Temple. The pitch would be high and the design kept with the rest of the

architecture, there was a gablet on the roof over each entrance, and a third one set off the main feature of the Warren Street front.

## Financing the Building was its Undoing

To finance the fine building, the Masonic Home Association was formed, with \$75,000 in subscribers' monies held by Masonic members. Years later, the stock of the corporation began to get into the hands of people not connected with the Masons. As elder Masons died, this was likely to happen. The fact that the enterprise became a heavy burden to carry as time went on led to further outside sales and finally a majority of the stock was acquired by the Trenton Banking Company. In 1917, after about 33 years, the building was raised to make way for a new building for the Trenton Banking Company.



*Trenton Banking Company replaced the Second Masonic Temple and stood on this site from 1919-1961*

## A Conversation with William A. Poland

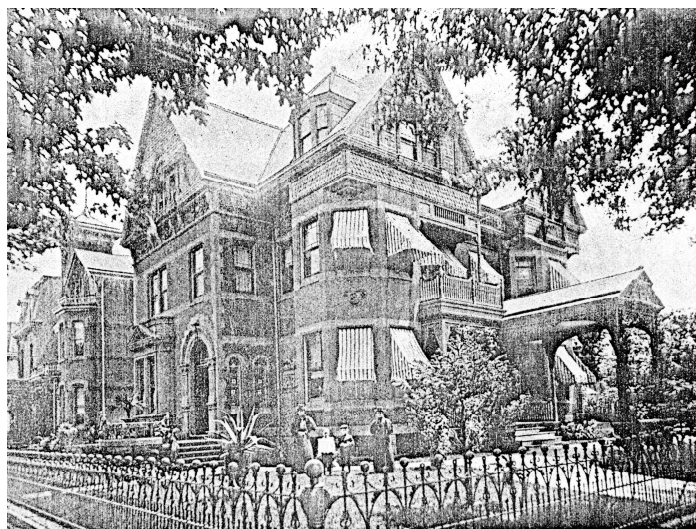
From John J. Cleary's April 4, 1928 *Sunday Times Advertiser* column "Trenton in the Eighties and Nineties."

"The other day I chanced to be on a State Street trolley car with Architect William A. Poland, and we passed Warren Street. Something was said about the recent razing of the Masonic Temple to make way for the new Trenton Bank. Mr. Poland was the architect who designed the Temple and he naturally was proud of a structure that won admiration for many years."

"The way it happened," said Mr. Poland, "was peculiar. I had been employed as a draughtsman in the Phoenix iron works at the time of the lighthouse building down there of which you had a good sketch some weeks ago in the *Times-Advertiser*. Then came an opportunity to go to New York City, where I was able to continue my studies as an architect and also to work into my profession.



“But then William Dolton, a relative decided to build himself a modern home at State and Clinton Streets, and he wanted me to draw the plans and supervise the work. I came back to Trenton for the purpose, and while I was here the new Masonic Temple was decided upon (1884). I was selected as the architect; it was my first important job, and while it was in progress my local connections became established, and here I have been ever since. The temple was an extraordinary undertaking in the local building world at the time, being about the first structure to employ steel to any great extent. Both my early jobs have gone down, the Dolton home having been sacrificed for the Y.M.C.A headquarters.”



*William Dolton home at State and Clinton Streets, designed by Poland from the Trentoniana Collection at the Trenton Free Public Library*  
(Click [HERE](#) to see more homes designed by Architect William A. Poland)