

*100th Anniversary*  
**Electa Chapter No. 19, OES**  
**May 3, 1986**

*In the Beginning...* taken from Electa Chapter's  
100th Anniversary program

In the early spring of 1886, several ladies working on Masonic aprons for Isaac Parker Lodge became interested in the formation of a Chapter of the Eastern Star. Seeking further information, they found a most willing helper in Sister E. Emily Little, P.M. of Vesta Chapter No. 10, Charlestown.

A committee was selected to get signatures on an Application for Charter. It was voted to name the proposed chapter "Mary Love" in honor of the wife of Charles A. Welch, Past Grand Master of Massachusetts.

On April 2, 1886, twenty-five ladies and eleven Masonic brothers went to Boston on the Fitchburg Railroad and walked over to the Charlestown Town Hall, where Vesta Chapter held its meetings. As the party passed along, it had the look of a parade, and a small boy immediately announced it to be the Salvation Army. Thirty-six members were initiated in Vesta Chapter that evening. Brother Ephraim C. Barrett and Sister Hannah F. Barrett, then members of Vesta Chapter, took their demits and also became charter members of the new organization.

On May 5, 1886, Mary Love Chapter was formally constituted after which Sister Mary E. Gleason, Worthy Grand Matron, assisted by Brother Charles Dike, Worthy Grand Patron, and Sister Annie B. Huntress, Grand Marshal, installed the sixteen officers. There was no Marshal installed in any chapter until 1891 and the first Associate Patron was in 1930.

On December 18, 1890, at the request of Robert C. Huntress, Worthy Grand Patron, we conferred the Degrees so that Magdalene Chapter No. 28 could be formed in Maynard.

At the Grand Chapter Session held in Wakefield on May 10, 1892, a petition was presented asking that the name of Mary Love Chapter be changed to Electa Chapter. This change was suggested because the name of Mary Love had no significance outside of a limited circle of our own members, and with the passing of time, would mean even less. The Grand Chapter granted the request, and the chapter was thereafter known as Electa Chapter No. 19.

In 1894, Electa Chapter conferred the degrees on people from Concord to allow the formation of Hawthorne Chapter No. 48, and in 1907 degrees were conferred to establish Hadassah Chapter No. 113.

On our first anniversary, we had a membership of 70, a gain of 32 members in a year.

It took hard work and strong perseverance to keep things going in those days. At the end of the year all deficits were met by voluntary subscriptions, and many Brothers had to dig deeply.

During the past century, 1, 835 members have signed the By-laws of Electa Chapter. Of our present roll of 219, 63 are life members and 32 are fifty-year members.

In 1911, we celebrated our 25th Anniversary with a banquet, for which tickets sold for 35¢. The dinner was followed by a reception and entertainment, and the entire expense of the evening was \$29.00.

Our first Matrons and Patrons night was held the same year with 200 present. It was also this same year the the Chapter voted to install a telephone for the secretary. This event took six months, as they had to wait for the Board of Advisors to meet to approve the wiring of the house. Evidently there were no telephone directories in those days, as members were asked to call the secretary and give her their telephone number.

In 1921, Sister Bertha N. Miller, Worthy Matron, and Brother John Cobb, Worthy Patron, initiated 154 candidates, the largest number recorded in any one year. The following year there were 111, and initiations were held in both the afternoon and evening, with time out for dinner.

Many useful gifts have been presented to the Chapter. Our first Ballot Box was a gift of then Senior Past Patron Lincoln Harper, with the first name being balloted upon that of Waltham Mayor Eben J. Williams.

When the General Grand Chapter decided that we must use Emblems, the pedestals were presented by Past Matron Bertha N. Miller in memory of her mother, and the Emblems were donated by the officers and members. We feel that these have added much towards making the "first impressions permanent."

In 1925 we sponsored Waltham Assembly No. 2, International Order of the Rainbow for Girls, and continued that sponsorship until 1981. Though we no longer sponsor this assembly, members of Electa Chapter continue to support the girls.

The first School of Instruction was held in Electa Chapter in 1915, and the chapter has been honored to host similar schools many times over the years. It has also hosted special evenings to honor Grand Officers, such as our Grand Esther Night in January of 1977 and our Grand Electa Nights in January of 1975 and February of 1986.

It is interesting to note that in 100 years, there has been little change in the form used for the records of the chapter, probably due to the efficient officers of early years.

In looking over our records, we find that Electa Chapter has given consistently each year to our Benevolences. Originally we held a Home Day, one day set aside for every member to work for our Home in Orange. In 1912 we had a share in starting the fund for the Hadley Bed.

Our members frequently make the trip to Orange, taking gifts to the residents and providing annual subscriptions to magazines. We have never missed a year in donating to the Isadore Forbes Benevolent Fund, the Home Maintenance Fund, and more recently to the Scholarship and Estarl funds.

One of our greatest interests had been the care of our sick, aged and shut-in members. As we are an old chapter, the list is a long one and our losses many. In the early days when a member passed away a committee was appointed to write an appropriate memorial, about two pages long, which was read and spread on the records. This practice has since been discontinued, and a Floral Star is sent to the service.

We are an active chapter, and until 1973 met twice a month. Our officers and members are always busy with various projects such as card and gift parties, fairs, lobster luncheons, penny sales, rummage sales, cake walks, dinners and fashion shows.

We have been honored twice in the past quarter century at our annual inspection by visits from the Worthy Grand Matron: Elisa F. Wheeler in 1961, Blanche H. Shaw in 1962, and Marilyn R. Gerrish in 1977.

June 6, 1982, was a day of great sadness for all who spent many happy hours in our beautiful Masonic Temple. A disastrous fire on that day destroyed the building and many of Electa Chapter's properties. We were able, however, to save a few things such as our Bible, pedestals, emblems and ballot boxes. We are grateful that no one was in the building at the time of the fire and that we were lucky enough to save what we did. Until a new Masonic Temple is constructed in Waltham, Electa Chapter is meeting in the Belmont Masonic

Temple under special dispensation from the Grand Chapter. While we appreciate Belmont's generosity, we all look forward to the day when we will have a new temple to call our own.

During the past century, many of our Sisters and Brother have been called home; some were past officers, many other members that had held no office but had served their chapter well. We will not forget them, as it takes more than officers to make a chapter a success. Their loyalty and support over the years has made the difference between success and failure – and fail we have not. We pay sincere homage to each and every one.

*Remembrance is the rose that blooms eternal ear by year  
Sweet memories clinging to the heart keep loved ones ever near  
The tender thought that linger on are links that ever bind  
With loved ones who have gone ahead, with those they've left behind.*

## *A Tribute*

The vast majority of this history was prepared by Electa Chapter's last Secretary Emeritus, Myrta W. Howe, Past Matron, for our 75th anniversary. Anyone who knew Myrta will recognize the love that went into writing this compilation. Other than updating it with activities over the past quarter of a century, it remains basically unchanged as a tribute to her.