

Founder of the Eastern Star

Was Kentucky's Greatest Mason. By Mrs. Sallie C. Mitchell, La Grange, Kentucky



THE HOME OF DR. ROB MORRIS, LA GRANGE, KENTUCKY

Dr. Rob Morris, whose life was spent in search of Masonic Light, was born at Boston, Mass., August 31, 1818, moved to Oxford, Miss., 1845, where he was principal of Sylvan Academy. Became a Mason in 1846; exalted to the Royal Arch at Lexington in 1848; passed the circle of Royal and Select Master at Natchez, Miss., in 1850; dubbed a Knight Templar the same year at Jackson, Miss.; Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret; Thirty-second degree of the Kentucky Sovereign Consistory; filled all the positions from Grand Junior Warden to Grand Master, from 1855 to 1858.

He attained the highest rank in York and Scottish Rites of Masonry and in December, 1884, was crowned poet-laureate of Freemasonry in New York City.

Dr. Morris was a classic scholar, a gifted poet and an extensive traveler, having spent much time in Europe and the Holy Land searching for Masonic and Biblical history and while sojourning in the East he had his first inspiration for a "female Masonic Order," mostly from the mountains of Gilead, the fields of Boaz, and other parts of the Holy Land, and he was in nowise indebted to any one for material for the Order of the Eastern Star.

For pretty nearly a century many efforts were made in Europe to establish an Adoptive Masonic Order and as early as 1776, there were efforts put forth in America and many times thereafter in different localities still other efforts were made from time to time to organize some sort of Order for the Master Mason's women folk, but to no avail, in fact there never was anything worthwhile accomplished until between 1850 and 1866, during which time Dr. Rob Morris originated and worked out all the five degrees, signs, symbols, passwords, grip forms and ceremonies. He first passed the work along to his wife, then they conferred the work to a neighbor Mason and wife (in this crude way) in Jackson, Miss., in 1850, and in the next few years he organized hundreds of chapters in Mississippi, Indiana, Kentucky and other states, and assisted with the initiation of

then was given by handing down or passing along the degrees and all secret work from Eastern Star to Eastern Star as no ritual had been published suitable for initiation up to this time.

Dr. Morris moved to La Grange, Ky., in 1860, and it was right here in his lovely home on Washington Street, that his master hand and fertile brain retouched, transformed and perfected all the secret work and ceremonies which he had already originated and here, also, he christened his Order "Eastern Star" and it was indeed Dr. Morris who organized and established the first permanent chapters of the Order of Eastern Star right here in our own beautiful America.

When Dr. Morris journeyed to the Holy Land in 1868, he left all of his original Eastern Star material, most sacredly, with his much esteemed Masonic friend, Bro. Robt. McCoy, New York, at the same time, urging and instructing him to push along this work in any way and every way possible for the good and advancement of the Order. Brother McCoy simply took up the Eastern Star work right where Dr. Morris left off and he will be forever blessed for the splendid good work in gradually improving and perfecting Dr. Morris' original Eastern Star manuscripts and in helping to perpetuate the sublime principles first proposed and established by Dr. Morris.



reconsideration must always be made by one who has voted with the majority, but the vote on the petition of a candidate being by secret ballot in which no member is permitted to make his vote known, it is of course impossible to know when the motion for reconsideration is made, whether the mover was one of the majority or the minority, and whether therefore he is or is not entitled under the parliamentary rule to make such a motion."

There is of course another reason for the rule, and that is, that the law relating to the ballot is not determined by the ordinary rules of parliamentary procedure. In the Masonic Lodge the authority of the Master cannot be questioned by any Brother present. The only appeal from his decision is to the Grand Lodge, to which body he is alone responsible. Whether the presiding officer of an Eastern Star Chapter is clothed with the same authority, we shall consider in a subsequent article, but I believe that we can agree with Masonic law to this extent, — that the presiding officer alone (in the absence of any specific law on the subject in the Grand Constitution), has the power to order a reconsideration of a ballot. If that officer, on the announcement of the result of the ballot, is satisfied that an error or inadvertence has occurred, and that the blackball was cast by accident, she may order a reconsideration of the ballot. Such reconsideration, however, must be ordered at once before the applicant has been declared rejected and before any member has left the room after the first ballot has been taken. Of course, even a presiding officer would not be justified in ordering a reconsideration at a later meeting or after the candidate had been declared to be rejected, or after any members had left the room, because it might have been one of the very members who had left who had purposely cast the unfavorable ballot.

Another troublesome question arises when the ballot is declared clear, but when as a matter of fact a blackball has been cast. The following situation has occurred in at least two instances, to the knowledge of the writer. While the ballot was in progress a blackball was cast by one of the members. The blackball failed to lodge, however, in the box. In one case it dropped in between the drawer of the ballot box and the small petition to the rear of the drawer. In this case, the one casting the blackball, allowed the ballot to be declared clear without objection. After the meeting was over, she called

attention to what she had done, and the ballot box was examined, and the blackball found in the place above indicated. The question of the legality of the petitioner's election naturally arose. It was held that the election was legal, and that the one casting the blackball should have immediately notified the Worthy Matron that in her opinion the ballot was not clear, but that having failed to do so, she had waived her rights, and that it would be improper for a new ballot to be taken. This ruling was undoubtedly correct, but on the other hand, if the Sister had arisen and doubted the correctness of the ballot, everyone present would of course have known that she had cast the blackball, and indirectly she would have violated the secrecy of the ballot. Despite this difficulty, however, the interests of the Order would be best guarded by following the law as laid down in this case, for if a precedent was established that the legality of an election could be questioned after a meeting was adjourned, we would never know who was elected and who was not. Of course, in those jurisdictions where a single objection holds up the initiation of a candidate, the one casting the blackball has a still further remedy.

In conclusion, it should be remembered that the eligibility of a candidate is determined solely by those tests provided in the ritual and in the constitutions and regulations of the General Grand Chapter. The method of balloting is determined solely by the provisions of the Grand Chapter within whose jurisdiction the applicant resides, but the admission or rejection of a candidate is exclusively within the province of the subordinate chapter.

If a candidate is eligible under the tests prescribed by the ritual and the constitutions and regulations of the Order, the determination of whether an applicant shall be admitted is within the exclusive jurisdiction of the subordinate chapter to which the application is made.

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Brother Ham's Jurisprudence Department is attracting widespread interest and attention in every part of the country. He will continue to give the World further valuable articles in succeeding numbers of the World that will be eagerly read by all who appreciate their importance and able setting forth of the underlying foundation principles of the order. — *Editor.*



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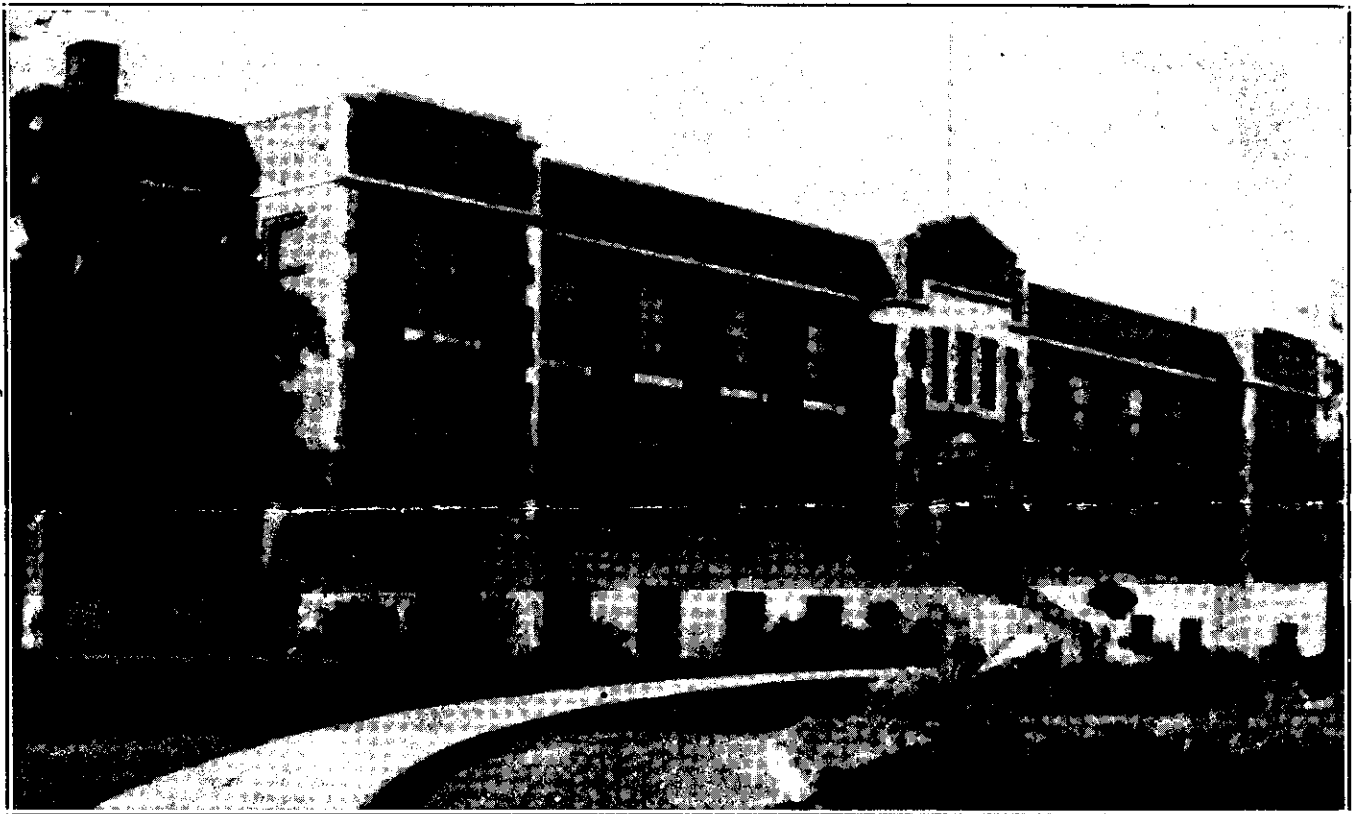
Eastern Star Benevolence

The Third in the Series of Articles Illustrating the Beauty of Eastern Star Principles

This is the Third of our series of articles on Eastern Star Benevolence. We are taking up this month the wonderful story of Eastern Star Benevolence as it is being exemplified in the great state of Iowa. A glance at this page shows a view of the beautiful Eastern Star Home erected by the Sisters and Brothers of Iowa at a cost of \$45,000. It was built in 1914 and is located in Boone and is a building of beautiful design as the picture shows.

was saved. The Home Board then selected the present location in West Boone and the five acres surrounding the building were acquired. It was dedicated on January 8, 1914. It is situated one block from the streetcar line and is properly and adequately protected against fire. It was built to accommodate thirty-five persons of the Home family. It has sheltered sixty-five persons up to the present time. It has now reached the limit

been laid. Out of the love and the hospitality of kindred spirits there has been fashioned in brick and stone, a temple which is as sacred as a God blessed shrine can become. A mecca for the tired, wearied soul to turn toward; a refuge whose portals are sun-kissed and kindly; a Home in all that the word can imply. Kindness, consideration, comfort without waste or luxury; protection without patronage; gentle, tender ministrations which



O. E. S. HOME, BOONE, IOWA, MAINTAINED ENTIRELY BY THE ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR OF IOWA

It was as far back as the year 1902 that the first move was made for the erection of a home in the state. At the session of the Grand Chapter of that year the following resolution was passed: "Whereas the growth and prosperous condition

of its capacity. The Home Board has been regularly incorporated. The articles of incorporation are most interesting but are too lengthy to be printed here.

The Home is ruled and governed by the Trustee

sooth the sunset days and weave in the heart the truest answer to the Heavenborn spirit of service — such is the atmosphere which greets you and grows more wonderful with each succeeding visit."

While Eastern Stars throughout the world will ever acknowledge Brother McCoy as the one man who by diligent faithful study worked out the ritual for the Order, at the same time, Eastern Stars in every land to-day revere the name of Dr. Rob Morris as the founder and organizer of the first permanent chapters of the O. E. S.

At the General Grand Chapter in 1880, Bro. T. M. Lamb, M. W. G. P., introduced Dr. Morris from Kentucky as the founder of the Order of Eastern Star. Dr. Morris was seated in the East after a most royal welcome and was showered with the grandest honors of the Order.

On this same occasion while making a brief talk, among other things Dr. Morris said: "The last active effort I put forth for the Order of the Eastern Star was the publishing of The Ritual in 1868, and my one regret now is that I did not give my undivided personal attention to this Order (pet child of my own origin) for this past thirty years, but I am glad to know that younger men and women have taken hold of this work with a zeal and wisdom which will insure success and I say to you, preserve this Order in unity, frown down recision, keep the Grand Chapters in rank for in union there is strength."

In THE EASTERN STAR of September, 1888, Bro. Willis D. Engle is quoted as saying, "To Dr. Rob Morris alone belongs the honor of being the founder of the Order of the Eastern Star"

and we have in our possession volumes of proof that the principles, forms, ceremonies and all our secret work originated, formulated and materialized in the classic poetic mind of Dr. Rob Morris, who has long since been gathered home to Gloryland and whose body to-day sleeps peacefully in the "Valley of Rest" our local cemetery at La Grange, Ky., the home of Dr. Morris from 1860 to his death, 1888, and here still reside two of his daughters, four grand-children and several great-grand-children. Many years ago the Kentucky Grand Lodge of Masons erected an expensive monument to the memory of Dr. Morris with the most imposing Masonic ceremonies, which will long be remembered here and we assure our EASTERN STAR readers that the Dr. Morris lot and grave are kept in splendid good condition and his old homestead here is in a wonderful state of preservation and is guarded as something sacred by Kentucky Stars and Masons. As we are in position to give information about Dr. Morris' connection with the early history of the O. E. S., his home life, his family or his church life, will be glad to answer all questions. The facts contained in this article are mostly from Dr. Morris' manuscripts and some of it from his children, Masonic and Eastern Star papers.

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DR. ROBERT E. MORRIS



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