

On July 16, 1895, thirty-two individuals assembled at the Masonic Hall in Sundance, Wyoming, for the purpose of organizing a local chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star. A petition for dispensation for its organization was prepared and "Electa" was selected as the desired name for the chapter.

On August 2, 1895, the petitioners again met in the Masonic Hall for the purpose of perfecting the organization. Past Grand Patron A. J. Pozansky of South Dakota, under authority of the General Grand Patron of the General Grand Chapter, duly constituted Electa Chapter No. 5.

Brother Pozansky, assisted by Sisters Susan Reed, Ada Greeg and Jessie Cashlin, of Queen City Chapter No. 7 of Spearfish, South Dakota, conferred the degrees, after which the chapter officers were duly installed. The Elected Officers were:

Sister Florence Hoyt	Worthy Matron
Brother Thomas H. Moore	Worthy Patron
Sister Mamie Hanson	Associate Matron
Brother Melvin Nichols	Secretary

Sister Mae Barton	Treasurer
Sister Ella M. Skaggs	Conductress
Sister Emma Rogers	Associate Conductress

The first and third Friday evenings of each month were selected for chapter meetings.

By-laws for the chapter, consisting of nine sections, were regularly adopted at the August 16, 1895, meeting.

In August 1898, Electa Chapter joined with the other seven Wyoming Chartered Chapters in the organization of the Grand Chapter of Wyoming. Unfortunately, Electa Chapter representation was not available for the convention in Casper, Wyoming, on September 14, 1898, that was held for the purpose of organizing the Wyoming Grand Chapter.

Eastern Star was very social in the early days. Only couples joined here at first. The first meeting of the month was for business and for the other social balls and literary and musical events were favored. Men were usually elected Secretary but it seemed that they had trouble getting to meetings so there were many problems and a lot of minutes missing.

Electa Chapter was visited May 21, 1897, by Sister Mary E. Partridge, Most Worthy Grand Matron of the General Grand Chapter. She had to be brought in some twenty-five miles from railhead by horse and buggy.

Members started paying dues in 1899 and the chapter began suspending members for non-payment of dues in 1900. In the beginning, fees were \$2.00 for initiation, memberships 1.00 for men and \$.50 for women.

In 1898 the chapter started receiving Grand Officer appointments but they were installed locally due to travel problems.

In 1902 the chapter assessed all members \$.50 to send the Worthy Matron to Grand Chapter at Rawlins and then Brother A. J. Poznansky went as "proxy" for her.

In 1903 the Sixth Annual Session of the Grand Chapter was held in Newcastle. Newcastle had no charter at that time. To reach Newcastle, in the northeast corner of the state, some of the members traveled the entire length of the state, several miles into Nebraska and across the corner of South Dakota in order to reach the meeting. The railroad fare alone exceeded \$50.00 and one could have reached New York City in less time.

The chapter experienced the first Official Visit in 1905. Sister Stickney, Worthy Grand Matron, traveled more than 2,500 miles by rail and 450 by stagecoach or private conveyance in her visits. She missed one chapter which would have added an additional 530 miles if attended.

In 1906 dues were raised to \$1.00 for Sisters and \$1.50 for Brothers and in 1907 the initiation fee was raised to \$5.00.

In 1907 Brother Joel Smiley, Electa's own, was elected Grand Patron at the Grand Session in Lander.

On June 19, 1908, Brother Joel C. Smiley, the Grand Patron of the Grand Chapter of Wyoming, who was one of the charter members of Electa Chapter, condemned the charter as originally granted for the reason that the names of eight persons appeared thereon who did not belong to the chapter and two names were written in after the charter was issued by the General Grand Chapter, and recommended that a new charter be issued. Accordingly, a new charter, dated September 1, 1908, was issued.

In 1910 Electa Chapter recommended organizing a chapter at Gillette.

In 1913 Electa was doing work at both monthly meetings and lady secretaries were keeping better records.

In 1922 dues were raised to \$2.00 for everyone and the Secretary was paid \$100.00 per year.

In 1923 the chapter adopted the first and third Wednesday evenings of each month for their meeting night.

In 1927 the place of meeting was changed from the Masonic Hall, located in the City Hall Building, to the Masonic Hall located in the American Legion Building. It was reported that the new location was considerably more comfortable and in keeping with its membership of seventy-eight.

Electa Chapter granted waivers of jurisdiction to form chapters at Newcastle in 1916, at Upton in 1920, and at Hulett in 1930.

In 1930 a piano was purchased and the ante room furnished. In 1932 five pedestals were made for the Star Points and \$50.00 was given the Masons to help pay the rent.

In 1936 the chapter meeting night was changed to the first and third Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.

In 1939 a beautiful electric signet was made for the chapter for \$75.00.

In 1947 the charter was again sent to the Grand Chapter with a request that a notation be made explaining the dispensation of the original charter. The Grand Chapter authorized the notation, "Original Charter issued by the General Grand Chapter, June 19, 1908, was condemned by Joel C. Smiley".

In 1949 election and installation were in June instead of December and that time we stopped having joint installations with the Masons. Dues were raised to \$3.00 and inflation fee to \$7.00

Over the next few years the chapter raised money for the Shriners Hospital at Salt Lake. Rent was up to \$125.00. A rug, new chairs for the Star Points, a new crown and scepter, and two new brief cases were purchased. The chapter started contributing to ESTARL. A Historical Committee of Sisters Loretta Durfee and Marion Thompson was appointed to write a history or yearbook for Electa Chapter which would then be kept current. Unfortunately, early records had been destroyed and the first minutes available were in 1901.

In 1963 the initiation fee was raised to \$10.00 and dues to \$5.00.

In 1964 ways and means discussions were under way to fund a new Masonic Temple.

In 1967 one of the local girls came home as the Worthy Grand Matron, Theresa Grice Duncan. She was born and raised in Sundance and lived here until she married William Duncan who taught in the Sundance High School.

For years, bake sales, smorgasbords, and ham and bean suppers were held to help raise money for projects such as ESTARL and the building fund. Other money makers were serving meals for the Black Hills Masonic Association and other organizations.

Finally in 1979, they moved into the new Masonic Building. The February 1, 1979, minutes states, "our first meeting in the new Masonic Temple".

In 1989 Marceline Oliver was elected Associate Grand Conductress at Cheyenne. She was installed Worthy Grand Matron at Sheridan, August 16, 1992.