

In 1904 Basin, the center of a recently settled community in Northern Wyoming, was busy at the task of making the area a place which would be sure to attract those seeking new homes in the West.

Homes, churches and schools had been completed or were in the process of construction. Much attention was being given to civic and social organizations.

One of the first projects under consideration was the possibility of a chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star for Basin. A few people, largely made up of those who held membership both in and outside Wyoming, joined in the venture. Several group meetings were arranged. Mrs. Anna D. Patton was named chairman and instructed to secure from Charles H. Townsend, then Worthy Grand Patron of the Grand Jurisdiction of Wyoming, all needed information and papers for making application for a charter for the organization. Several meetings were held to discuss details and make sure that all necessary requirements would be met.

Left to be given final approval was a name for the chapter to be, not an old name, but something new. Many were suggested and quickly discarded. The final selection, "Lewisia", was an offering of James I. Patton, a charter member. Lewisia is the name given to a lone species of the bitter-root family. It is native to Wyoming, thrives at an altitude of six thousand feet or over, and bears its many petaled pink blossoms close to the ground. It was named for Meriweather Lewis of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. It blooms in July and August. Our charter members thought it a happy choice, as we of today still do. First, the name was new in Eastern Star lore. It was associated with one of the great events in our history and last but not least it, possesses a musical sound. So far as we can learn, our chapter is the only chapter in existence to bear the name of "Lewisia".

The first mention of an Eastern Star chapter at Basin is found in the proceedings of the Grand Chapter of August 1904. Charles H. Townsend, Worthy Grand Patron, says in his report, "On June 20, 1904, I granted a dispensation to Anna D. Patton and fifteen others to organize a chapter at Basin, Wyoming, to be known as Lewisia U.D., and on the same day I appointed Anna D. Patton as my deputy to organize the chapter. Returns did not reach me in time to be considered at this meeting."

The dispensation was extended and for another year Lewisia was still a U.D. Chapter with Anna D. Patton still its Worthy Matron.

In the August 1905 proceedings, the Worthy Grand Matron, Martha E. Stickney, tells of her visit to Lewisia Chapter. She was the first Grand Matron to visit officially. In the same proceedings, the committee on charters and returns recommended that Lewisia Chapter be granted a charter upon surrender of the Dispensation, and the approval of its By-laws by the Worthy Grand Matron. On September 5, 1905, the charter, which hangs in the chapter room, was received. Lewisia Chapter was now a reality, a link in the family of chapters, and one of the many chapters dedicated to good work. It was in capable hands and hopeful of a bright future.

Our Sister Bertha Van DeVender served as Worthy Grand Matron of the Grand Chapter in 1921 at the Grand Chapter session in Lander. Sister Bertha made official visits to all 32 chapters in Wyoming that year. She left Basin on February 24 and had completed all visits by June 27, 1921. Sister Bertha's husband, and our Brother, Charles Van Devender served the Grand Chapter as Worthy Grand Patron in 1929. He presided at the 32nd Annual Session with Sister Harriet Eckerson as Worthy Grand Matron.

Brother Charles was contacted by a group in Hawk Springs, Wyoming who wanted to start a chapter. He passed the request on to the next Worthy Grand Patron to investigate and see if the group was serious and diligent enough to support a chapter. No chapter of the Order has ever existed in Hawk Springs, so they apparently were not.

Brother William Dolezal served the Grand Chapter as Worthy Grand Patron at the 41st Grand Session in Rawlins in 1938. He served with Sister Daisy Anderson as Worthy Grand Matron and

their session chapter room was decorated with daisies in her honor. Brother William was a charter member and first Secretary of Newcastle Chapter No. 30, Newcastle. He had also been a Worthy Patron for two years in Gentian Chapter No. 23, Gillette, before he joined Lewisia Chapter. Brother Dolezal was honored to issue the dispensation for Rainbow Chapter No. 44 U.D. in Casper.

On February 9, 2001, Signal Cliff Chapter #49, Ten Sleep, consolidated with Lewisia Chapter #16, Basin.