

Encampment was a thriving mining town in 1905. On June 24, 1905 a group of Masons, wives, daughters and sisters petitioned John H. Lott, Worthy Grand Patron, to organize a local chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star.

On July 5, 1905, Martha E. Stickney, Worthy Grand Matron, was commissioned to institute a chapter of the Order at Encampment. On July 20, 1905, aided by members of Saratoga and Alpha Chapters, she instituted Chapter No. 17. Elected officers installed were:

Sister Ellen J. Tilton Worthy Matron
Brother William J. Wernli Worthy Patron
Sister Amelia Sterrett Associate Matron
Sister Hermae Phelps Secretary
Sister Florence A. Smith Treasurer
Sister Belle Wemli Conductress
Sister Mae Phillips Assoc. Conductress

After the installation of elected and appointed officers, Saratoga Chapter No. 12 conferred the degrees of the Order upon Sisters Louise Still and Mayme Sterrett, who then became charter members of the chapter, making a total of sixteen charter members. Initiation fee was set at \$3.00, affiliation at \$1.00 and annual dues at \$2.00.

The Secretary was instructed to collect dues from January to July 1, 1906, in order to get funds to buy badges, jewels, a seal, and officer's ribbons. The jewels were purchased for \$24.22.

Pedestals were purchased in 1908 at a cost of \$36.50 plus \$15.05 for freight. The chapter paid half the cost of the piano purchased by Encampment Lodge No. 19. The lovely star point chairs were purchased from Brother Englehart for \$4.75 each.

The first carpet was a beautiful red. It was covered with canvas in 1910 because of dancing at social affairs. The canvas was not removed until 1941.

The Grand Encampment Herald was published in the Masonic Hall until 1912. Later the lower hall was used as a social hall.

In the early days, the chapter often gave \$10.00 gold pieces, teaspoons engraved with the chapter's name and number, and cutwork done by the late Sister Tennant as special gifts.

In 1915 the following bills were incurred for the visit of the Worthy Grand Matron: Livery Hire-\$1.50; Room-\$1.50 and a gift of a lunch cloth-\$2.50.

In 1922, when Rawlins Chapter hosted the Grand Chapter, the Saratoga and Encampment Chapters furnished fish for a fish fry.

The signet was purchased in 1946 as a project of Worthy Matron Harriet Platt. Prior to that time, a small canvas signet that hung from a stand and was used for initiatory work.

A rug fund was started in 1950. The chapter room and reception room were carpeted with new red carpet in 1965.

For many years, Eastern Star paid the Masons only \$20.00 a year for use of the hall. In 1974, after realizing they may not be paying enough, they raised their rent payment to \$25.00. Currently they pay \$125.00 for rent

In 1974 the chapter started raising money by selling pie and coffee at the local Jamboree. This tradition was carried on for many years. Originally, pie was \$.40 and coffee was \$.10 a cup.

In 1976, our nation's 200 anniversary, every organization was asked to have a project. The chapter chose to renovate our fellowship hall. The old plastered and wall-papered walls were covered with sheet rock and painted. The floors were stripped and refinished.

We are proud of our part in the ESTARL program. Two of our valley boys received scholarships, Charles Blom and Robert Finney. The Reverend Pat Jeffrey completed his Doctorate Degree in 1993 with the assistance of two ESTARL scholarships.

Encampment Chapter has always been ranked the smallest chapter in the state and has often won attendance records which were based on the highest percentage of resident members attending.

In recent years, two highlights of the chapter's history were the Home-coming of Sister Harriet Platt, Worthy Grand Matron, and the Kick-Off for Brother Leonard Clark, Worthy Grand Patron. With advance planning the chapter was well able to meet the expense of these occasions. Each year the Masons entertain our chapter at a wild game dinner in the fall and a picnic in the summer. In return, the chapter has entertained the Masons at a February dinner party.

FROM 1997 TO 2002: For several years this chapter made Christmas stockings or small gift baskets for patients in the surrounding hospitals. We discontinued the gift exchange between members in favor of donations to a worthy cause or local organization, to purchase toys or other items needed by these children.

The Chapter sponsored a scholarship for a graduating senior from the Encampment school for several years. Three of the recipients were chosen to receive a Grand Chapter Scholarship as well.

In 1997 Sister Harriet Platt, PGM, was appointed to serve on the General Grand Chapter Youth Committee. In 2000 Brother Leonard Clark, PGP, was appointed to serve on the International Peace Garden Committee for the General Grand Chapter.

Brother Ralph E. Platt has served as Worthy Patron 23 times in Encampment Chapter #17; however, not all terms have been consecutive.

With the decline of membership, the chapter was struggling to continue. In 1999 a proposal was made to consolidate with another chapter, however, when the vote was taken, the members chose to try to keep the chapter open. By early 2002 there was no choice left other than to relinquish our charter or consolidate. Saratoga Chapter #12 was contacted and all necessary requirements were followed. Encampment Chapter #17 consolidated with Saratoga Chapter #12 in Saratoga on May 1, 2002 in a ceremony presided over by WGM Luella Blackmon and WGP Lloyd Brown.