

Shortly after the Masonic Lodge was established in Pine Bluffs, eleven Master Masons, their wives and two sisters of Master Masons presented their petitions to establish a local chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star. Acting on a dispensation issued by the Grand Patron William E. Sloan, a meeting was held May 18, 1914, for the purpose of instituting the chapter which was to be known as Pine Bluffs Chapter, U.D.

Brother William E. Sloan, instituting officer, appointed Sister Inez E. Robinson, Grand Secretary, Sister Grace E. Copeland, Grand Chaplain, and Brother N.A. Anderson, Grand Marshal, to assist in the ceremony.

Charter members consisted of eighteen petitioners and four affiliates.

Brother Sloan announced the following appointments for the chapter, U.D: Sister Sarah E. Marshall, Worthy Matron; Brother William McCarty, Worthy Patron; Sister Ethel Beatty, Associate Matron. Brother Sloan duly installed all officers.

Following a recess, the chapter was called to order by Brother W.M. Foust, Past Patron of Oak Leaf Chapter No. 6, who invited the Past Matrons and Past Patrons of Oak Leaf to enter the chapter room. They assumed the officer's stations and exemplified the ritualistic work, opening, balloting, initiation and closing.

The Degrees of the Order were then conferred on Dr. Byron W. Marshall, completing the list of twenty-three charter members.

There are seven meetings recorded before the charter dated September 8, 1914, was received. It was signed by Sister Ruth Taylor, Worthy Grand Matron, Brother William E. Sloan, Worthy Grand Patron, and Sister Inez Robinson, Grand Secretary.

Considerable credit goes to Brother Sumner Miller and Sister Sarah Marshall for their untiring efforts in getting the chapter organized. Sister Marshall served as Worthy Matron for the first four years and Brother Miller seemed to have served almost everywhere.

Regular meetings were initially set to be held on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. The hour of the meeting was to be 8:00 p.m. from April 1 until October 31 and 7:00 p.m. from November 1 until March 31. However, on January 6, 1915, the By-laws were amended to read "the regular meeting to be on Thursday on or before each full moon."

During the early years, the chapter struggled to stay alive, reference the Worthy Grand Matron's address at Grand Chapter in 1916, in which she stated: "Before starting on my trip through the state, I received word from the Worthy Matron of Pine Bluffs Chapter that she could not have a meeting May 22 but gave no reason. As I had planned to stop there, I did so to investigate matters. I called up the Worthy Matron and Worthy Patron and had a talk with them. They seemed to be working under peculiar circumstances there. There are so few Sisters that the Brothers have to take many of the offices. Their members are scattered over considerable country and since many were away at the time, they could not get enough together to give the work at all."

A bright spot in this Grand Chapter Session was the appointment of Brother Sumner Miller as Grand Sentinel.

To prove that all was well in Pine Bluffs, the chapter more than doubled its membership during the next years, adding forty-three members and one affiliate. It is reported in the minutes that during much of the 1920's, the Worthy Matron called special meetings, almost always two and sometimes three per month to initiate candidates voted on at their regular meetings.

On January 14, 1920, a special note in the minutes read: "All offices except one were filled by duly elected and appointed officers, which is something that does not happen very often."

In 1922 it was agreed to award the Secretary with \$2.00 per meeting for her work.

It is noted from the Worthy Matron in 1928 that her duties included carrying coal up from the basement and building the fires in the kitchen, dining hall and chapter room and hosting the Worthy Grand Matron in her home during her official visit.

In 1928 Queen Esther Circle was formed. The Circle has since furnished much of the equipment in the chapter room, kitchen and dining room as well as financing the chapter in other ways.

In 1929 the chapter voted to also present Past Patron's jewels.

The Grand Matron's visit of May 1, 1946, was out of the ordinary. A howling snowstorm raged all evening. The lights would go out and come on again during the meeting, roads were blocked with snow and visitors from Cheyenne were snowbound at the Bastian home on Highway No. 30 the rest of the night, but all seemed to have a good time.

On November 7, 1946, the chapter voted to waive jurisdiction to allow Burns, Wyoming, to form a chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star and later helped them with their first initiation and to get started in chapter work. In the process of transporting their paraphernalia to Burns, the face of the signet was badly crushed. Due to cost of a replacement, the face was repaired with tape.

In 1948 the annual dues were raised from \$2.00 to \$3.00.

In 1952 the chapter adopted a system of Life Membership and on May 1, 1952, Sister Minnie M. McDowall was presented with a Life Membership Certificate.

On February 3, 1953, the official visit of the Worthy Grand Matron was postponed due to a storm and in April 1957 a meeting was canceled because of a blizzard.

During its first fifty years of existence, starting with only twenty-three members, the chapter has since initiated 431 members and affiliated thirty-nine members. There were seventy-nine deaths and numerous withdrawals, suspensions and demits resulting in a membership of 185 on its Golden Anniversary.

In 1962-63 Sister Verna Cabeen, an accomplished artist, made and painted a new face for the Signet in memory of her late husband, a Past Patron of Pine Bluffs Chapter.

Sister Katherine Smith served as organist for thirty-seven years, from 1943 to 1980 and missed very few meetings.

Since its inception, members of the chapter worked diligently to preserve and augment the purpose and traditions that were handed down through the years. Money making projects provided funds for contributions to many charitable causes.

Early in 1987, because of declining interest in the chapter and new membership, Pine Bluffs Chapter approached Burns Chapter No. 47 with the possibility of combining chapters. In July 1987, Sister Ada Mary Melonuk, Worthy Grand Matron, presided at a meeting in the Burns Meeting Hall to consolidate the two chapters.