No. 987  FOUNDER'S DAY HONORING ROBERT MORRIS
By Lola Lamoreux

Worthy Matron: Tonight we are honoring the memory of our Founder, Robert Morris. To him we owe a deep debt of gratitude and it is fitting that we should honor his memory each year. Our Associate Patron will give a brief summary of his life.

Worthy Patron reads or tells the following:

Brother Robert Morris, whose name brings a thrill of pride to every Eastern Star heart, was born near Boston, Mass., August 31, 1818. He became a school teacher and taught in several states, finally locating in Mount Silvan Academy for some years. Here he married in 1841. This union was blessed with what at that time was regarded as a rather small family of seven children.

In 1850, he with his family, moved to LaGrange, Kentucky where they resided until his death. He was offered the chair of Ancient and Modern History in the Masonic College at LaGrange, in which college he received the degree of L.L.D. After teaching a few years, he became President of the college.

Robert Morris was, during his lifetime, probably the widest known Mason in the country, if not in the world. He was crowned Poet Laureate of Free Masonry, and the greater part of his life was devoted to Masonic knowledge. He received the degree of Masonry at Oxford, Miss., in 1846 and was Grand Master of Kentucky in 1858. Brother Morris also received other degrees, orders and honors to the number of 113, among them the first Master of the Royal Solomon Lodge of Jerusalem. He also organized and opened the first Grand Lodge in the Holy Land and was an honorary member of 150 Masonic bodies.

A woman, who was initiated into the then new order of the Eastern Star by Robert Morris himself, gives us the following vivid description of him: "He was a powerful and magnetic speaker. There would not be a movement in the hall while he was speaking, for he held his audience spell bound. He was a small man with brown curly hair and a short full beard. He had the merriest blue eyes you ever saw and every one who ever heard his voice or had shaken hands with him could never forget that hearty brotherly handclasp of his."

Robert Morris was deeply spiritual. He was a great student of the Bible and one of the most devoted Christians, America has produced. While in Palestine, he worked as if in the living presence of the Master. This spiritual vision of Christ he reflected in a great many of his beautiful poems.

But perhaps the most enduring and magnificent monument that he left is the Order of the Eastern Star, which owes its very existence, if not its origin to Brother Morris' generous heart, fruitful brain and untiring efforts in the face of derision, scorn and abuse.

It has been said of him that while he was the most learned and accomplished gentleman, he was very plain and unassuming, with a most pleasing personality, full of wit and humor and with a heart overflowing with love for his fellowmen. He was generous and frequently known to part with his last dollar to aid some one in distress. He passed from this life in 1888, having lived the allotted span of life, three score and ten.

The Worthy Patron then reads or tells the following:

We all realize that the Order of the Eastern Star is a religious Order, and all of its teachings and symbols are taken directly from the Bible. Its ideals are founded on the Holy Scriptures and its precepts are the precepts taught by Christ. The closer we follow the truths imparted to us through our Order, the nearer we are walking with the Master, who gave us these sublime truths.
Symbolism is the oldest known form where by knowledge might be imparted. It dates back to the dark ages before the civilization of man. This form of teaching is still used and is as inspirational and beautiful a way to gain information as one could desire. All secret Orders use a system of symbols to impress the fundamental truths upon their candidates.

The Order of the Eastern Star is no different in this respect than other orders. Our symbols are few and simple, and easily understood.

First of all the stars themselves have always been looked upon as symbolic of important events. The star with the five points has always been our emblem and is a very ancient and sacred symbol. As you know, it is made from triangles and signifies to the Eastern Star our inseparability from God, and the final blending of all with goodness, upon the Chapter room floor or upon the Signet.

The Star also stands for Humanity, the body of all mankind; also for five senses which are represented by five points.

The lights are lowered. The electric signet is turned on (if no electric signet, bring out the chart). "Star of the East" is sung as a solo or duet.

At the close of the song the Conductress approaches the East. She stands by the Signet and as the Patron names the symbols she points them out.

Worthy Patron speaks: Our Signet or Chart is our impressive way of giving our initiates instruction. The Signet is full of beautiful symbols and hidden meanings. In the Bible we find many symbols used when writing about Christ. Many of these are found on the Chart. Have you ever thought of this when listening to the Patron's lecture? Here we have, "The Lion of Judah", "The Lamb", "The Lily of the Valley", "The Rose of Sharon", and "The Bright and Morning Star". When we think of these things our ceremony has a great deal more beauty for us and also more significance.

The Conductress resumes her station and the Patron is seated.

The Worthy Matron speaks: The Star Point emblems have a deep and significant meaning for us all. Sister Adah will you explain the symbolism of the sword and veil?

Adah: The sword alone is two edged and like the tongue may be sharp and harmful. The veil draped about the sword is a mantle of charity reminding us that our words and deeds should be charitable and tempered with mercy.

Worthy Matron: Sister Ruth, what symbolism is hidden in the sheaf?

Ruth: The sheaf is an emblem of plenty and teaches us the value of patient industry. It has other meanings too. We know how much industry must be put into the production of a sheaf of grain. Man plows the field, he sows the seeds, eagerly waiting for its maturity. In due time comes the harvest. The grain is bound in a golden sheaf. But man alone cannot produce this sheaf. A Power over which he has no control guides its destiny. It is God who makes the soil, who creates the seed and who sends the rain and the sunshine. So we may see in our sheaf at the station of Ruth, not only the emblem of plenty and the reward of patient industry, but a beautiful symbol of God's care over all things.

Worthy Matron: Sister Esther, what significance has the crown and scepter?

Esther: The crown and scepter is an emblem of royalty and power. This does not necessarily refer to earthly kings. Our Savior is called the Prince of Peace, the
the King of Kings, and the Mighty Councillor. He is our King and wears a crown of Glory. When we approach Him, he graciously extends the scepter to us. Thus we may come to Him at all times for aid and comfort.

Worthy Matron: Does the broken column have a special meaning for us?

Martha: The broken column is the emblem of a person cut off in the vigor of life. To us the emblem reaches beyond the materialistic and into the spiritual world. In the column we see a symbol of Faith. We know that a trustful faith is greater than knowledge. Like Martha, our faith is real. Thus the broken column reminds us that we should walk by faith and not by sight.

Worthy Matron: Sister Electa, you will tell us of the symbolic meaning of the cup.

Electa: Electa's cup reminds us that no one lives to himself alone. As Electa kept alive the sparks of generous hospitality, so a warm welcome like a river should ever flow from this Point toward the members and strangers in the Chapter. The living point of good fellowship is at this station. Here is the symbol of love, love so warm and true that it lightens a Chapter room.

Worthy Matron: Sister Conductress will you tell us the meaning of the labyrinth?

Conductress: The winding of the labyrinth is symbolic of the journey of Life. Every woman is a daughter, some are sisters, many are mothers and wives, and still others, widows. During the initiation, all travel through this symbolic journey of life, where each stage is marked by an important period in a woman's life. It is in the labyrinth that the initiate is shown the way which leads to the Star in the East, and is instructed in the signs and passes which open the five gates of the Order.

Worthy Matron: And so we learn that the mission of our Star as it shines forth in the world, is to bring the world to realization of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. To cultivate the true spirit of helpfulness and Charity towards others is the aim and purpose of the symbolism of the Order. Only by being kind and helpful towards all human beings and gentle and forgiving toward each other, can we hope to realize the great purpose of our Order. Christ said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." Also, "As ye would men should do unto you, do ye also unto them." In conclusion shall we not all say with gratitude in our hearts, "Thank you Robert Morris for the beautiful Order of the Eastern Star". Let us all unite in singing "Blest be the tie that Binds."

Calls up Chapter.