

**PALMYRA KING'S DAUGHTERS FREE LIBRARY, INC.**  
**ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION - TAPE #30**  
**INTERVIEW BY THOMAS MARINARI WITH FLORENCE DECI**  
**PALMYRA, NY, JULY 7, 1981**

**SUBJECT: HISTORY OF ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR**

**TOM:** Okay. Today I would like to discuss the Order of the Eastern Star, and it's been active here, strong and active since 1913. But before we get into the local aspect of it, I wonder if maybe you could give me a brief history of the O.E.S. and its origin.

**MRS. DECI:** The Order of the Eastern Star is one of the Masonic adoptive rite organizations. It was started in France in the middle of the 1700's. It came over to this country with Lafayette's soldiers. The transmission of the Tenets of the Order was very informal at first, done by word of mouth to very specifically designated female relatives of Master Masons. The basic tenets were the same as they are today, but the whole thing was very, very informal. There was a man by the name of Robert Morris, who in 1848 became interested in the organization and from that time on tried to formalize it, giving it rituals, as a matter of fact, two. The first one was so very complex, so very expensive to put on that the thing died out. People just couldn't carry on under it. The second was so simple that they lost interest and it didn't carry on. However, he had based what he had done on a thesaurus, which was a record of what was basically the tenets of the Eastern Star which had been authorized for a committee to write down everything connected with the Order of the Eastern Star. This was done in the late 1790's and from then until 1848, there were five revisions of this thing. They tried to keep the thing alive because there were those Masons who felt that it was worthwhile. There were also Masons who thought it was a terrible thing and wanted no part of it. The basic thought, it was a terrible thing and wanted no part of it. The basic idea way back then was that this would give the female relatives of Master Masons an opportunity to make themselves known to Master Masons if they were in need of help. And these were provided to do this. And very often proved useful. And the other thing was to induce the women, these women, to look with favor upon Masons since they were excluded from Masonic meetings. They took it ill and it was- -.

**TOM:** Let's give these women something to do.

**MRS. DECI:** It certainly was. So they, in order to overcome this, introduced the Order of the Eastern Star in this country.

After the failure of Robert Morris's two attempts, which took several years, to formalize the order, he gave up in more or less disgust and turned everything over to a friend of his who had worked with him for many years by the name of Robert McCoy.

In 1866, the Masons in New York City put on a fair to supplement funds which they were raising to build a temple in New York City. And at this fair, many of the wives who had received

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the degrees of the Order of the Eastern Star in this informal manner that I have spoken about, helped the Masons by manning booths. And the fair went on for months and they became well acquainted with each other as they manned these booths. And when the thing closed on the last day of 1866, they hated to give up the relationship that they had with each other. And so they would meet periodically in the homes of one or the other of these women. This kind of died out too because there was nothing really for them to do. What they wanted to do was charity and there was really nothing formal to encourage them to engage in charitable acts. And so they asked Robert McCoy, who was a friend of some of them, if he would give them a formal ritual with means to hold their meetings in a formal fashion, to introduce new members in a formal fashion, to initiate new members, to install their officers and he said he would. And he went to work and he came up with the Chapter System for which he wrote a ritual and they organized Alpha Chapter of New York on December 28, 1868 for the first meeting. They met for some time successfully and other Chapters were installed and when there were a sufficient number of these (The law of the organization is that there have to be at least five Chapters in a state and then they can get together and organize a Grand Chapter). And this is what they did in New York State. And on the - oh it was 1870, the Grand Chapter of New York was organized and this was the first Grand Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star.

**TOM:** Was this the first one internationally?

**MRS. DECI:** The first one anywhere. The first Chapter. You see there had been these other informal, loose organizations until Robert Morris's attempts which had failed.

**TOM:** Then it just stayed informal again after that to this time?

**MRS. DECI:** Well, yes. It was only just a few years and McCoy had a ritual which he used, but it wasn't until he established the Chapter System that the thing took hold. And then it really took off. And as I say, the Grand Chapter of New York was organized in 1870. That was the first Grand Chapter.

There are now Grand Chapters in New York, a Grand Chapter in New Jersey, a Grand Chapter in Scotland and what is known as a General Grand Chapter. In General Grand Chapter there are 64 state and other country Grand Chapters. Provinces of Canada, for example, all have joined in General Grand Chapter. In New York State there are 46 districts and these generally take the outlines of counties. Some counties being grouped if the number of Chapters is such that there would be too few in any one county, then there would be several. In our county, we are, our Chapter is a Chapter of Wayne District in which there are 12.

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**TOM:** There are 12 right in Wayne County?

**MRS. DECI:** Right in Wayne County. There are, altogether, 46 Districts in New York State. And each is composed of a certain number of Chapters. The number of Chapters vary. Ontario, Seneca, Yates which is the neighboring District has 17 Chapters and is a large District.

**TOM:** Well what happened after once they finally started getting going and they were organized? Did the Masons take over?

**MRS. DECI:** No. One of the - - . The relationship with the Masons is a peculiar thing. Some were very enthusiastic about the whole idea. Others forbid their members to have anything to do with the Order of the Eastern Star and they were completely against it. After the spread of Chapters outside of New York State, all over, there was a situation in which some rule or regulation was proposed and the Grand Chapters, of which there were several by this time in various states, would either accept what the proposal was or reject it. And there was one such proposal in which the idea was that Masons could belong to the order and they would have all the rights and privileges except the right to vote on candidates. There was a man who was the patron of a small Chapter in Indiana, who when it was proposed at the Grand Chapter meeting Indiana, objected to this. Well, he didn't get very far and the thing was passed, but he was most unhappy about this. He was not the kindest of men, shall I say, and so he said this was the thing that started that movement which would oust Robert McCoy from his position as the leader of the Order of the Eastern Star. And so what he did was propose that there should be a General Grand Chapter which would be over all the Grand Chapters for the purpose of making the ritual the same. Now this business about the rituals has caused a lot of misunderstanding and disagreement and what have you. General Grand Chapter claims that they use Robert Morris's ritual and that New York State uses Robert McCoy's ritual. Well inasmuch as all of the Grand Chapters in General Grand Chapters are Chapters, it has to be an adaptation of McCoy's ritual. But McCoy's ritual was based on a thesaurus which Morris's rituals were based on.

**TOM:** On the - - ?

**MRS. DECI:** This thesaurus, this history, this 50 year history that I told you about.

**TOM:** How do you spell that thesaurus?

**MRS. DECI:** T-H-E-S-A-U-R-O-S. There is truth and there is falsity in both of these claims. The whole thing goes back to what the French brought here through Lafayette's soldiers. All the things that developed out of that were included in this thesaurus which was revised five times

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between the end of the 1700's until 1847, 48, along there. Morris used this information, he said he did, to write his rituals which didn't take. McCoy went to the same source and took Robert Morris. He had worked with him for years and years to write his Chapter System ritual. But New York State has revised this I don't know how many times since for various reasons. As times change, there have to be changes. Grand Chapter, General Grand Chapter has revised it in their fashion. The basic principles are the same everywhere and there you have it.

**TOM:** What are the principles?

**MRS. DECI:** Well, we believe in Charity. We believe in truth. We believe in friendship with each other. We believe in helping each other. And we do it. It makes no difference where you are or who you are. Whether you are a member of the General Grand Chapter in Kentucky or a member of the New Jersey Grand Chapter or a member of the New York Chapter or anywhere else, you're still sisters and brothers. This is the largest organization in the world in which both men and women are members.

**TOM:** What's the percentage as far as men and women?

**MRS. DECI:** Oh, I can't tell you the percentage of men, but it's small, it's mostly women. In New York State men may attend the meetings under proper conditions if they are Masons. In General Grand Chapter you have to be a member before you can attend any of their meetings. That's one of the differences, but that's not a fundamental difference the way - well a difference in basic principles would be, the signs of the order, the various ritualistic basis within the signs, although there may be superficial changes. Okay.

**TOM:** So Masons can attend the O.E.S. meetings then?

**MRS. DECI:** In this state, yes. Under the proper conditions.

**TOM:** O.E.S. can't go to Mason meetings can they?

**MRS. DECI:** No. I know. Masons don't admit women anywhere. Again this is terrible, an unheard of, frightful thing.

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**SUBJECT: ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR - ORIGIN OF PALMYRA CHAPTER**

**MRS. DECI:** Now in 1913, our Chapter was organized.

**TOM:** Right. It was constituted - - . It was organized in June and constituted in November.

**MRS. DECI:** Right

**TOM:** Who was kind of the kindling force here in Palmyra behind it?

**MRS. DECI:** Well, we had some members who belonged in Macedon which is an older Chapter than ours. One of the Grand officers was from Walworth. And they're both our mother chapters in a sense, in this way. Some of the charter members of Palmyra Chapter were from Macedon from Richards Chapter, no not Richards - - it's gone. Anyway from the Macedon group. Now our Lodge No. 248 was definitely against our organization. Judge Sawyer was a very important Mason. As a matter of fact, he was the Grand Master.

**TOM:** Wasn't he one of the heads of New York State?

**MRS. DECI:** Yeah, he was Grand Master of the State of New York Masons. There is no General Grand Lodge of Blue Lodge of Masons. They are separate Grand Lodges in various states and various countries. And he was Grand Master of New York State Grand Lodge. But not many of his daughters or his wife were allowed to become members. He was definitely against it. And all important Masons in Palmyra, and Palmyra was an extremely active Masonic town and had been from the beginning. All of those were against our Chapter.

**TOM:** Were there any particular reasons do you think?

**MRS. DECI:** Well it - - .

**TOM:** Just the personality of the people or what?

**MRS. DECI:** A certain group of Masons right from the beginning were against women having anything to do with it. They just didn't think it was the thing to do. And I don't know if they had any basic reasons other than that. They just didn't think it was right and they didn't believe in it and women were not going to be members of such a thing. I think they thought it was cheap. I think they thought it was useless. I think they thought it was an imposition on the Masons. None of which of course is true.

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**TOM:** Basically it was just a misunderstanding of what it was.

**MRS. DECI:** They wouldn't allow us to meet in the Masonic Rooms. We had to find other places to meet. Well then finally they did allow us to meet in the Masonic Rooms after a while. This was not too long before I became a member which was some fifty years ago. So we have been meeting for quite a while in the Masonic Rooms. But they still didn't really approve of us even then when I first joined. They just didn't approve of us as an organization. But they gradually began to get the idea that maybe we were human beings, we were their wives, we were their sisters, we were their mothers, we were their daughters, we were their girls in some cases. And we couldn't be quite so bad as they seemed to think. Well it went on this way with the feeling gradually, gradually easing. About 15 years ago the rooms where we met were sold, well it was longer than that. They were sold to this local man, businessman, and he raised the rent and he kept on raising the rent. And this began to niggle at us and we decided that we should have our own building and not rent. And we looked and we looked and at this point, the Masons and the Eastern Stars really got together. We had money saved for a building. The Stars did. And this was a useful thing. We finally got a break when the owner of the local theater decided to go out of business.

**TOM:** The Strand Theater?

**MRS. DECI:** The Strand, there being no demand for movies much anymore, TV etc.. This was about 15 years ago. One of the local merchants wanted to buy the building in order to have that area for a parking lot.

**TOM:** Would that be for Colacino's?

**MRS. DECI:** Uh huh. And the owner of the Strand didn't like that idea, so he offered it to the Masons and to the Stars for less than he could have got from Colacino. He gave us a really big break because he felt that that was better use for his building, it wasn't going to be torn down. And so we bought it. And we have been working together ever since to pay off the mortgage and keep the building up and it's probably about 15 years that this has been going on. And we have remodeled the building. The Masons and the members of the Eastern Star are very close. We work together on such things as Fish Fries for a long time to make money. We still work on the Fair booth together to make money. Everybody cooperates and the feeling is very good.

**TOM:** Did the Masons move in at the same time then?

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**MRS. DECI:** Yeah, we all moved in together. As a matter of fact, we formed a Temple Association to which each of the five Masonic bodies automatically belong. Each member of the body belongs to the Temple Association automatically unless he specifically requests not to be a member. And we've had I think only one such request that I can remember.

**TOM:** That's nice. That brings everybody together.

**MRS. DECI:** And we all work together. The Temple Association is incorporated so that it can own the building and each of the bodies rents from the Temple Association. In other words, this is one way we help to pay expenses and evens it out very well. And we all work for the Temple Association. We all work for ourselves too in order to pay our own bills.

**TOM:** Where had the Masons been meeting before they moved?

**MRS. DECI:** Upstairs in the main block, two doors down from where Knapp's were. Upstairs there. As a matter of fact they had - - . It was on the third floor and they had rooms over the next store too. So that it was a wider area than just one store's width. They had a dining room and a kitchen on one side and the Lodge rooms and then there was well, a storeroom sort of, on the third side. But it was a great relief not to climb three flights of stairs.

Palmyra Chapter is the largest Chapter in the District now. Newark had been. But we have about 200 members and we maintain this membership although - - .

**TOM:** There are 200 members in Palmyra?

**MRS. DECI:** Well of Palmyra Chapter. Many of our members are scattered but they are still a member if they keep up their membership in the Palmyra Chapter.

**TOM:** You're saying once you join in one place you stay?

**MRS. DECI:** If you want to, you don't have to. You can also have dual memberships. Very many people who have been a Matron of the Chapter move away and would like to go to another Chapter, but they don't want to give up their home Chapter because they were Matron there. Then they can be members of the other Chapter too and have dual membership if they wish.

**TOM:** Being a Matron, what does that - - ?

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**MRS. DECI:** That's the head of it. As a matter of fact we ought to discuss the leadership.

**SUBJECT: ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR - OFFICERS**

**MRS. DECI:** In a Chapter there are 11 elected officers. There is the Matron and the Patron who are the women and man head of it. There is the Associate Matron and the Associate Patron who will be Matron and Patron the next year if they so wish. There is a Conductress and an Associate Conductress, there are three Trustees and there is the Secretary and the Treasurer. And then there are a group of appointed officers so that the total number of officers is probably twenty-four. And these others are appointed by the Matron when she goes into office. She holds office for one year. The Matron, the Associate Matron, the Conductress and the Associate Conductress are called line officers and they move up each year. So that eventually the Associate Conductress becomes Matron. And in this way they learn the work. They learn to know the members. Learn all the things that are smart to know if you are going to be a successful Matron. Okay?

**TOM:** They don't have all the different Councils and Chapters that the Masons do then?

**MRS. DECI:** No. No, although there are other organizations of female relatives of Masons. There's the Amaranth etc. But they are not connected in the same way that the Masonic groups are. The State Grand Chapter has like officers and then a whole bunch more that are appointed because of the size of the state, that has to be, for instance we have a Marshall. There would have to be a whole bunch of Marshalls in order to handle state business and this sort of thing. So that there are many, many more State Officers. But it is all in the same relative vein as the local chapter. One of the things we do however, in each district we have two District Grand Officers. A District Deputy Grand Matron who represents the Matron, the Grand Matron who is the head of the Grand Chapter and a District Grand Lecturer who represents the Grand Patron in the District. And they see that things are done right in the District. See things are uniform, everything. The way it should be.

**END OF SIDE A OF TAPE 30**

**MRS. DECI:** Then there is also in the State a group of liaison officers. For instance, a Grand Chapter of Kentucky will appoint a member from New York to act as a liaison between the Grand Chapter of Kentucky and Grand Chapter of New York. Although she is appointed by the Grand Matron of Kentucky, she is considered a member of the Grand Chapter of New York, of that family. In other words, she's a Grand Officer of the Grand Chapter of New York. And every Grand Chapter does this, so that there is a Grand Representative of Kentucky in New York and



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a Grand Representative of New York in Kentucky. And so on for all the Grand Chapters, all around. Do you see?

**TOM:** So every State is affiliated with every other state.

**MRS. DECI:** Well it isn't affiliated. It's just these Grand Representatives are appointed for the purpose of increasing friendship and understanding between their respective two Grand Chapters.

**TOM:** But every state is involved in doing this?

**MRS. DECI:** But every state is involved in doing this. And not only every state but all the other Grand Chapters like British Columbia, Puerto Rico and Mexico and wherever there are Grand Chapters. Okay?

**TOM:** So there is a lot of intermingling between Chapters.

**MRS. DECI:** Yes and every Grand Representative is supposed to visit the Grand Chapter of the state where the Grand Matron appointed her. That is, I am the Grand Representative of California here in the Grand Chapter in New York. It is my duty to go to California and attend their Grand Chapter session and then come back here.

**TOM:** That's a good state to have.

**MRS. DECI:** Yeah. It was interesting and I was very happy to do it. We are supposed to promote the basic principles, friendship and understanding between the Grand Chapters.

**SUBJECT: ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR - OFFICIAL VISITS**

**TOM:** How about just the Local Districts, do you like - - ? Does O.E.S. here get together with Newark and Macedon a lot?

**MRS. DECI:** Oh yes. The District Deputy and the District Grand Lecturer have what they call Official Visits to each Chapter in their District, just as the Grand Matron has an Official Visit to each District in her jurisdiction. And when the District Deputy and the District Manager to the various Chapters on their Official Visits, the other Chapters of the District are invited and there are representatives from each of the Chapters, when it is possible, who go to each of these

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District meetings. And other Grand Officers in your District - many of the - well all of these Grand Officers come from Districts, from Grand Chapter. If you have a Grand Officer in your District, to the extent that they can, they go too, to the Official Visits to promote friendship and understanding, good feelings. And we have it, we really do. I've made hundreds of friends in the three years that I have been District Representative.

**TOM:** And it's a real friendship that you feel?

**MRS. DECI:** Definitely. Definitely. I was appointed January 1, 1979 and in June of that year I lost my husband. It was a traumatic experience for me and I don't think I could have gotten through it if it hadn't been for my sisters in the Eastern Star and the Masons, who just supported me to the end. I am fully sold on the whole thing. Do you want to ask me any more?

**TOM:** Oh yeah. There's more.

**MRS. DECI:** All right, go ahead, I can talk and talk.

**TOM:** All right, so I guess we will go back to the organizing here. Mary Parker was the first really Matron and George Tuttle was the first Patron. Can you tell me anything about these people?

**MRS. DECI:** Well, not very much. They were local people who were interested in this sort of thing and George Tuttle was a Mason. He was a well known businessman of the area. I knew them both. I don't know what more to say except they were grand people. And capable people.

**TOM:** I've got a note here. I guess I picked this up from the paper. The first meetings were held in the Redman's Hall on Cuyler Street.

**MRS. DECI:** Yes, that's right. Yeah, that was before the Masons would let us in.

**TOM:** What was Redman's Hall?

**MRS. DECI:** Well I think it was that place that burned.

**TOM:** Oh, okay.

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**MRS. DECI:** I think, I am not absolutely sure of that. We also met on Fayette Street, up, I think it was where the Hardware Store was at one time. But that was before the Masons would let us in.

**TOM:** Were the Masons very active as far as their opposition to you or were they kind of quiet about it and just pretended they - - ?

**MRS. DECI:** Well, no. They just ignored us, m wouldn't let us in.

**TOM:** But when they got home at night they really must - - .

**MRS. DECI:** No. No. No. When I first joined there was quite a bit of that feeling then. But we knew what we knew and we did what we had to do.

**TOM:** And everything worked out all right.

**MRS. DECI:** It worked out just fine. There were no quarrels, it was just the way it was. You know, they don't quarrel about the fact that the sun comes up and that sort of thing. But maybe you use an umbrella to shade yourself from it.

**TOM:** Is there any noted member of the O.E.S. that you would like to comment on her in Palmyra? People you felt really did a lot for the local - - .

**MRS. DECI:** Well, every Matron. Every Matron right down the line was a valuable addition. But the thing, the thing about it is that from the "Lowliest" to the "Highest" there's a oneness.

**TOM:** So nobody really stands out. It is everybody together that stands out.

**MRS. DECI:** Yeah. That's the way I feel about it.

**TOM:** That's the way it should be.

**MRS. DECI:** It's really. I suppose there's politics.

**TOM:** You can't get away from that.

**MRS. DECI:** But not in the local Chapters and that's where the action is there.

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**SUBJECT: ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR - LOCAL PROJECTS**

**TOM:** How about Local Projects? Are you pretty much active just - - ?

**MRS. DECI:** Well, our local projects are, as I mentioned before, to work with the Masons in the Temple Association to keep the organization going and to support our organization throughout the District and throughout the State.

**TOM:** Are you involved with anything within the community itself, and type of civic - - ?

**MRS. DECI:** No. No, as an organization we do not do that sort of thing. But our members are Christian people who do the Christian thing, wherever, you see, but not as an organization.

**SUBJECT: ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR  
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**TOM:** The Catholic Church has always been down on the Masons. Was their outlook on the Order of the Eastern Star similar?

**MRS. DECI:** Yes

**TOM:** Were Catholics allowed to join?

**MRS. DECI:** There is nothing in the Eastern Star rules and regulations to prevent a Catholic from becoming a member except that individual members may object.

**TOM:** But will the Catholic Church let a Catholic join the O.E.S? Do you know that?

**MRS. DECI:** As I understand it, no. I'm not a Catholic and I don't know any more than what I hear. But they frown upon it because of the secrecy that is a part of it, and the secrecy is only really to prevent adverse comments etc. about what we do. What we do we keep to ourselves and it's nobody else's business, idea and that's the only reason for it. I think it's the same with the Masons.

**TOM:** Has it just been the Catholic Church that has had this outlook, do you know? Has there been any other churches that have - - ?

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**MRS. DECI:** I don't know anything about churches other than the usual churches in this country, Catholic and Protestant. Indian, there are Indian members. There is a lodge, I think it's in New York City, of Masons that are all Catholic. We don't have any objection. It's the Church that objects because, I suppose, of the secrecy. They don't want to be kept out.

**TOM:** That's something that originated years and years ago over in Europe, right? As far as the Church's outlook on the Masons.

**SUBJECT: MASONS**

**MRS. DECI:** The Masonic Order is centuries old, much older than the Eastern Star. As a matter of fact, it is kind of hazy where it did start and how it did start. There are all kinds of claims that go back to Solomon's Temple times. It depends on what you mean when you talk about the Masons. Probably the sensible thing is the time when Masons were a guild. It was a working guild. They were Masons who built. And then the members of that Guild gradually made it a social thing and made it a - well what it is today, by a kind of a transition. I have a feeling that that was maybe in the thirteenth or fourteenth century. I can't remember.

**TOM:** It's been going strong ever since. Right?

**MRS. DECI:** Yeah. There was a time in this country, in this State, when there was a Morgan Affair and there were all kinds of stories (most of them untrue) about it, but the feeling got so strong against the Masons that they practically died out. It was during this time that this Thesaurus was written to keep at least the record of what had happened so that if things eased off, which of course they did, and it started to be reactivated.

**SUBJECT: ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR - PRESENT MEMBERSHIP**

**TOM:** Is the membership right now - is it increasing or decreasing? I know I've talked to one of the Masons in town and he said that they were having a hard time lately as far as getting new people into the order.

**MRS. DECI:** The overall picture is discouraging both for the Grand Chapter of New York and the other Grand Chapters. It is decreasing. Palmyra Chapter seems to maintain its membership pretty well around the 200 mark. It's been that way for a long time. But I guess we are fortunate.

**TOM:** I guess it seems that people just are, just the times today.

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**MRS. DECI:** Yes. There are so many other things that people could do that they don't feel that they need this. I don't know if it is because Palmyra is an old-fashioned town, which it is, whether this has helped us in maintaining our members or not. But we certainly do.

**SUBJECT: ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR  
ANNUAL BALL WITH MASONS AND KING'S DAUGHTERS**

**TOM:** Was the O.E.S. involved in that annual Ball they used to have at Christmas time with the King's Daughters?

**MRS. DECI:** Yes. Yes they were. Mostly as guests.

**TOM:** That was a pretty big event here in town?

**MRS. DECI:** Oh it was "The" big dance of the year. That was before I came here they did that. But not too long before. But there are many tales that I heard when I came about that dance. "The" dance of the year.

**TOM:** That was with the King's Daughters. Do the two organizations get together in any way now?

**MRS. DECI:** No. Many of the members of Eastern Star and the King's Daughters are one and the same. But there are many members of the King's Daughters who are not members of Eastern Star. That's a more widespread organization and takes in members from all the Churches including St. Anne's.

**TOM:** How secretive is the Order of the Eastern Star? I mean, are there certain things that members can and cannot say?

**MRS. DECI:** Um Hm. There are. And I haven't.

**TOM:** So I won't ask you what those are.

**MRS. DECI:** It won't do you a bit of good.

**TOM:** But the secrecy has been kind of overplayed don't you think?

**MRS. DECI:** Yes, probably.

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**TOM:** People are always leery of things they don't know anything about.

**MRS. DECI:** They always talk about them too.

**SUBJECT: ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR  
MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS**

**TOM:** Okay as far as membership, you need to have a relative who is in the Masons. That's right?

**MRS. DECI:** Yes.

**TOM:** How close a relative?

**MRS. DECI:** Well, close enough so that there is a family feeling. It used to be stricter than it is. It used to be that you had to be a wife, mother, sister, daughter or widow of a Master Mason. But now a niece, a granddaughter or this sort of thing is all it takes to become a member. But there must be some family relationship.

**TOM:** Is it the type of organization that most people once they join it, they are in it for life? Have you found that to be true?

**MRS. DECI:** Pretty much. Pretty much. Sometimes when people move away or something if there hasn't been a strong interest in the phase, they will drop out, but they are in the minority. We have many members who have been members for years and years and years, including me.

**TOM:** How long have you? You've been active 50 years now you say?

**MRS. DECI:** Fifty-one now. About 50. Fifty-one this year.

**TOM:** How long have you been secretary?

**MRS. DECI:** Well I was secretary - - I guess it was about '47 till, I don't know, '71 or '72 and then I dropped out for about six years because I thought that somebody else ought to know what goes on. There are two members now who have been Secretary, but they are working outside the home, so I took it up again. And I've been in, I don't know, five years or so.

**TOM:** How often do you meet?

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**MRS. DECI:** Twice a month. Sometimes that causes a little difficulty on Official Visits if two Chapters meet on the same night. For instance we meet on the same night as the Williamson Chapter. So what we do is make a schedule so that when the Williamson Chapter has their Official Visit we don't have a meeting and we all go to Williamson. And they do the same for us. And there are other Chapters that have the same meeting night too. Of course being 12 Chapters and six nights in a week that you can meet on (because you can't meet on Sunday) it would have to be like that. But it couldn't be better.

**TOM:** And you have a good time.

**MRS. DECI:** Yes, indeed.