Eastern Star

***What is it?***

The Order of the Eastern Star is the largest fraternal organization in the world to which both women and men may belong.  Worldwide, there are approximately 1 million members under the General Grand Chapter

Eastern Star is a social order comprised of persons with spiritual values, but it is not a religion.  Its appeal rests in the true beauty of the refreshing and character-building lessons that are so sincerely portrayed in its ritualistic work.  A deep fraternal bond exists between its members.  It is the wholesome relationship of sisterly and brotherly love brought about through high principles exemplified in our lives which makes us near and dear to each other.

While this is an Order composed of people of deep spiritual convictions, it is open to all faiths, except no faith.  The personal welfare of our members is vital to all of those in the Eastern Star, and it is considered a privilege to help another member whenever we can.

[Eastern Star Indiana Grand Chapter](http://www.indianaoes.org/)

[Eastern Star General Grand Chapter](http://www.easternstar.org/)

*Purpose*

The stated purposes of the organization are:  Charitable, Educational, Fraternal and Scientific; but there is much more to it than that.  Dr. Rob Morris, the Poet Laureate of Masonry, founded the Order using the beautiful and inspiring Biblical examples of heroic conduct and moral values.  These portray the noble principles which should adorn the personal lives of Eastern Star members.  Eastern Star strives to take good people and through uplifting and elevating associations of love and service, and through precept and example build an Order which is truly dedicated to charity, truth and loving kindness.

*Projects*

Concrete evidence of the charitable nature of the organization as it affects others is the millions of dollars which have been raised within the membership to support national, jurisdictional, and local charities.  Many Grand Jurisdictions have homes for their senior members.

*History*

The history of the Order of the Eastern Star is divided into three Eras:

1. The First Era extended from 1850 to 1866, under the leadership of Dr. Rob Morris, Poet Laureate of Masonry.
2. The Second Era extended from 1866 to 1876, under the leadership of Robert Macoy of New York.
3. The Third Era extends from 1876, when the General Grand Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star, was established to the present time.

Of these eras, the first is perhaps the most important as it prepared the way for the other two.

The real origin of the Order of the Eastern Star, like Masonry, will always be shrouded in mystery.  Many researchers believe it had a French origin as early as 1703.  By some, this is claimed to be the first inception of "Female Masonry" or "Androgynous Degrees"  --  (degrees for both men and women).

There appeared at this time, to be a demand for "Side Degrees" or Degrees conferred on ladies, and quite a list sprang up -- "Heroines of Jericho", "Danger in the Dark", "Tall Cedars of Lebanon", etc.  These were extensively used but soon fell into decay for lack of lasting worth.

As to the real origin of the Eastern Star degrees in its Initiatory form, there is not the least shadow of doubt that the honor belongs to Dr. Rob Morris and its real origin comes under the First Era.

Dr. Morris had traveled many years.  He had written many books on Masonry which are valued references in many Masonic Libraries.

Never quite satisfied that all the good in Masonry should be confined to men, Dr. Morris felt that Masonry should be for the whole family.  But by the laws of that Ancient Order, women are not eligible for its degrees.  Knowing he could not change the Ancient Landmarks of Masonry, Dr. Morris sought some method by which women could share with the Masonic Brother the same inspiration that "prompts man to noble deeds."

Although he harbored these feelings for years, it wasn't until 1850, while confined to his home after an accident, that Dr. Morris fully developed the Eastern Star Degrees in their present initiatory form.

During this time, he carefully thought out the symbolism and significance of the floor plan and the corps of officers.  He conferred the degrees upon his wife and daughters, and some neighbors, presumably having an idea to clothe the ladies with certain words or signs whereby they might make themselves known to Master Masons.

These signs and so-called mysteries of the Order were communicated freely to all Master Masons and their relatives.  Dr. Morris and other prominent Master Masons gave many lectures and conferred the degrees on many ladies throughout the nation.