

**Prince Hall Conference of
Grand Matrons and Grand Patrons
Order of Eastern Star
UNITED STATES, CANADA AND FOREIGN JURISDICTION**



**Origin and History of the Adoptive Rite
Among Black Women**

**The Scrolls of Time
Great Women of the Order of Eastern Star**

***The Trust of the Sparrow
The Strength of the Eagle
The Peace of the Dove***

Researched, compiled and written by Past Grand Worthy Matron Jessie Mae Ayers

The basis of this historic achievement follows the lines laid down in print by Prince Hall, the founder of the first organized body of Black Free and Accepted Masons in America, and the rejection he and his colleagues met in obtaining a charter for African Lodge No. 459 in Boston, Massachusetts.

These pages in the history of the Adoptive Rite Among Black Women also focuses on the dreams of Grand Master William H. Myers, Union Grand Lodge, Jurisdiction of the District of Columbia and Mrs. Georgiana Thomas. In 1874, Grand Master Myers found himself wrestling with the sign posts of the time. There were many who were opposed to any decisions to grant permission for the establishment of the Adoptive Rite for Black Women in the District of Columbia. He finally granted permission for Sir Thornton A. Jackson 33° and his colleagues to establish the first Chapter of Adoptive Rite, Order of the Eastern Star Among Black Women in United States. During this same time frame, Mrs. Georgiana Thomas, a lady of color, nurtured her dream and brainchild of Queen Esther Chapter becoming a reality. All of these dreamers had one thing in common. Each had to struggle with the "Cross Winds of Change."

August 10, 1874, Sir Thornton Andrew Jackson 33° received the several degrees of the Rite of Adoption of the Order of the Eastern Star from Brother C. B. Case, a Deputy and agent of Illustrious Robert Macoy 33°, Supreme Patron of the Rite of Adoption of the World. In addition Sir Thornton A. Jackson 33° also received a letter from Brother C. B. Case granting him the authority to establish chapters of the Order of Eastern Star among eligible Black women. In Audience to the authority granted by Grand Master William H.

Myers, Union Grand Lodge, Jurisdiction of the District of Columbia, Sir Thornton Andrew Jackson 33° established the first Eastern Star Chapter among Black Women in the United States. On Wednesday, December 1, 1874, Mrs. Georgiana Henson Thomas opened the doors of her home at 708 O Street, N.W., Washington D.C. and witnessed the establishment of Queen Esther Chapter No. 1. The first chapter of the Adoptive Rite among ladies of color. The first Worthy Matron was Sister Martha Welch and the first Worthy Patron was Brother Thornton A. Jackson.

In the avalanches of remembrances are many great women whose names appear on the scrolls of time, leaving legacies for future generation to emulate. In the exercise of high authority they were guided by the purist principals of justice and moderation. Such was the commitment of Georgiana Henson Thomas. Like Harriet Tubman, "The Moses of the Underground Railroad", Georgiana worked with the underground railroad at the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church located at 15th and M Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C. She was one of the sixty-three (63) founders of the Plymouth Congregational Church where she served as a Deaconess until her death. She served as the first Grand Royal Matron of the Grand Chapter of the District of Columbia from 1892-1894. Georgiana Henson Thomas also served as the Grand Representative near the Grand East of Illinois in 1904. She passed in July 1941 at the age of ninety-nine.

The Adoptive Rite, Order of the Eastern Star has experienced phenomenal growth since its inception on Wednesday, December 1, 1874. Today there are forty-four (44) Grand Chapters dispersed throughout the United States, Canada, Liberia, and the Commonwealth of the Bahamas and the recently formed Grand Chapter of the Caribbean. All of these Grand Chapters are basking under the umbrella of the Grand Lodge in whose jurisdiction they were organized. History has recorded and indicates there now exist three thousand five hundred ninety-three (3,593) subordinates chapters and approximately one hundred eighty thousand seven hundred and nine (180,709) in membership all within the frame work of these Grand Chapters. The first Grand, Chapter of the Adoptive Rite was organized in 1880 at Washington, North Carolina. The first Grand Matron was Sister Julia Foy and the first Grand Patron was Bishop J.W. Hood. This Grand Chapter was followed closely by a Grand Chapter organized in Tennessee. Another great event evolved in Boston, Massachusetts one hundred twenty-five (125) years after the founding of African Lodge No. 459 by Prince Hall. How ironic it was that the Conference of Grand Chapters, Order of the Eastern Star was perfected on September 11-12, 1907 in the same state There seemed to have been a spirit or aura beaming from the attendees as they assembled an mingled at the first conference. The following Grand Chapters were represented: Arkansas California, District of Columbia, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, New England, New York, North Carolina, Ohio and Tennessee. The following officers were elected: Kittie Terrell, Illinois, Supreme Grand Royal Matron; Walden Brooks, New England, Supreme Grand Royal Patron; Viola Hart, Georgia. Supreme Associate Matron and Addie Duffie, Maryland, Supreme Grand Treasurer. The conference was severally style First it was the Supreme United Grand Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star. In 1910, the name was changed to the Interstate Conference of Grand Chapters. In 1924, the name was changed' the International Conference of Grand Chapters. The International Conference of Grand Chapters was officially dismantled by the Prince Hall Conference of Grand Masters in Colorado Springs, Colorado in May, 1976. The conference is now known as the Prince Hall Conference of

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Grand Chapters, Order of the Eastern Star. The current presiding officers are Grand Worthy Matron Valda A. Lewis, Jurisdiction of Indiana, Conference Chairman; Grand Worthy Patron Odis Ward, Jurisdiction of Nevada, Conference Co-Chairman. All fronts of the Order of Eastern Star are continuing to help humanity through their scholarships, giving to many charitable causes and other humanitarian acts which demonstrate caring and sharing. The order continues to move forward with a great faith, yet remembering that faith without deeds is naught.

**Grand Chapters
Order of the Eastern Star
Prince Hall Affiliation**

Jurisdiction	Chapter	Year and Location of Chapter
1. North Carolina	Grand Chapter	1880 at Washington, N.C.
2. Tennessee	Excelsior Grand Chapter	August 31, 1881 at Nashville
3. California	Gold State Grand Chapter	December, 1882
4. Kansas	Prince Hall Grand Chapter	1883-1884
5. Indiana	Prince Hall Grand Chapter	October 25, 1888
6. Arkansas	Royal Grand Chapter	1885 at Augusta
7. Kentucky	Cecelia Dunlap Grand Chapter	August 13, 1885
8. Connecticut	Prince Hall Grand Chapter	1888 at Washington, N.C. Instituted November 23, 1894
9. Illinois	Eureka Grand Chapter	1889 at Chicago
10. Michigan	Prince Hall Grand Chapter	August 30, 1889 at Chatman, Ontario, Canada
11. Ontario	Prince Hall Grand Chapter	August 30, 1889 at Chatman, Ontario, Canada
12. Mississippi	Bathsheba Grand Chapter	July 4, 1890 at Vicksburg, Mississippi
13. Missouri	Harmony Grand Chapter	December 26, 1890 at St Louis, Missouri
14. District of Columbia	Georgiana Thomas Grand Chapter	May 24, 1892
15. Florida	Bethlehem Grand Chapter	January 15, 1893 at of Jacksonville, Florida
16. Alabama	Mizpah Grand Chapter	July 21, 1894
17. New England	Grand Chapter	Instituted November 23, 1894
18. New York	Eureka Grand Chapter	October 18, 1895 at New York City
19. Maryland	Myra Grand Chapter	November 26, 1896
20. Ohio	Amaranth Grand Chapter	August 3, 1899 at Chicago, Illinois

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21. Georgia	Prince Hall Grand Chapter	August 29, 1899 at Savannah, Georgia
22. Washington	Prince Hall Grand Chapter	July 11, 1900 at Tacoma, Wash. Institute July 17, 1925
23. Virginia	Grand Chapter of Virginia	November 28, 1901 Richmond, Virginia
24. Oklahoma	Queen Bathsheba Grand Chapter	1908 at Wagnor, Oklahoma
25. South Carolina	Prince Hall Grand Chapter	June 15, 1901
26. New Jersey	Oziel Grand Chapter	Instituted June 24, 1913
27. West Virginia	Electa Prince Hall Grand Chapter	January 14, 1914
28. Pennsylvania	Deborah Grand Chapter	July 17, 1916 at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
29. Arizona	Prince Hall Grand Chapter	July 11, 1921 at Phoenix, Arizona
30. Nebraska	Amaranthus Grand Chapter	October 15, 1921
31. Delaware	St. Mathews's Grand Chapter	March 15, 1922 at Wilmington, Delaware
32. Colorado	Columbine Grand Chapter	July 24, 1922
33. New Mexico	Prince Hall Grand Chapter	June 1925 at Albuquerque, New Mexico
34. Louisiana	Esther Grand Chapter	January 12, 1938 at New Orleans, Louisiana
35. Massachusetts	Prince Hall Grand Chapter	September 9, 1944
36. Oregon	Prince Hall Grand Chapter	June 26, 1961
37. Bahamas	Prince Hall Grand Chapter	1964
38. Alaska	Prince Hall Grand Chapter	June 10, 1972 at Anchorage, Alaska
39. Rhode Island	Prince Hall Grand Chapter	1980
40. Nevada	Desert Rose Grand Chapter	November 21, 1981
41. Caribbean	Rita-G Grand Chapter	April 24, 1996 Barbados, West Indies
42. Texas	Prince Hall Grand Chapter OES of Texas	November 9, 1996 at Houston, Texas
43. Iowa*	Prince Hall Grand Chapter	
44. Minnesota*	Prince Hall Grand Chapter	
45. Wisconsin*	Unity Grand Chapter	

*On-going research for these jurisdictions.

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It is a fact that without knowledge of one's history there can be no appreciable future. The illuminaries whose deeds and contributions highlighted on the pages of time in each jurisdiction and the Conference of Grand Chapters are rich in history and each should be proud to be "Primus Inter pares" (First Among Equals). It is evident they served with zest and zeal moving onward and upward carrying the standard high to brighter horizons. They skillfully orchestrated achievable and infinite goals on the voyage of life.

The many themes of the Conference of Grand Chapters that have come down on the streams of time were easily comprehended because of the oasis of thought transmitted from one to another. These themes have been varied throughout the years yet each brought forth clarity of purpose. Histories are filled with accounts of explanations of causes and effects of great women of the order; Matriarchs who kept vigil pulling together to make things happen. Their many deeds of incomprehensible valor and self-sacrifice for masonry and their crowning achievements are evident for all humankind to see. If they could make the difference in a transcendent moment in time they made that difference. The Adoptive Rite from 1874 to the present moment in time continues to glitter with proven credibility.

Past Grand Worthy Matron Jessie M. Ayers is a member of Miriam Chapter No. 4 Order of Eastern Star, Georgiana Thomas Grand Chapter, Jurisdiction of the District of Columbia. She served as Grand Worthy Matron in 1989 and was Grand Historian of the Georgiana Thomas Grand Chapter from 1971-1991. She is currently serving her fifth year as Chairman, History Committee of the Prince Hall Conference of Grand Chapters.