

## 1976 Esther Tribute

Adapted from a program written by Anna Foster, Grand Esther and Hazel Selbo

About 500 years before Christ was born, the Hebrew people were captured by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Mordecai of the tribe of Benjamin who had seen kindred and friends slain in the capture of Jerusalem was taken to Persia. Among the captives carried from Palestine was a little orphan girl named Hadessah, a cousin of Mordecia whom he adopted and raised as his own daughter, carefully teaching her all the Jewish doctrines and heritage. Mordecai, a learned man was soon appointed to serve as the Hebrew Minister to the court of Persia. Thus, though a captive, Hadassah (now called Esther) lived amid the luxurious surroundings off the palace, naturally absorbing much of the stateliness and dignity necessary for a great woman. She grew up to be a lovely and beautiful young lady, well prepared for the role she was to play in the unfolding drama.

In the third year of the rein of King Ahasuerus a lavish party lasting many days was held. After seven days of celebrating the King commanded his beautiful Queen Vashti to appear unveiled before all the Princes and Potentates in the Council Chambers. Queen Vashti refused to obey the summons and aroused the anger of the King. On the advice of his Princes, who feared that all wives would follow her example and refuse to obey them, they advised the King to divorce her and banish her from his sight forever, which he promptly did....he then instructed his aides to search throughout the empire for the most beautiful girls and the one who pleased him most should become the new Queen of Persia.

Mordecai immediately brought his ward Esther to the place as a candidate carefully instructing her not to reveal her Jewish heritage. For six months, the girls were given beauty treatments and taught the customs of court life and how to please the King. The great day arrived and the candidates came before the king. When it was lovely Esther's turn to appear before the King, he was delighted with her beauty, poise, charm and grace and immediately proclaimed her as the new Queen of Persia.

About 5 years later, Haman, Prime Minister of Persia persuaded the King that the Jewish people were his enemies whereupon an edit was issued that on a certain day, the entire Hebrew race should be destroyed. Mordecai sought out Esther and informed her of the cruel edict and implored her to go before the King to save her people. Esther was afraid to go before the King because it was the law of the land that any man or woman who appeared unsummoned could be put to death unless pardon by the King extending the golden scepter. Mordecai insisted she should help her people, suggesting this may be the reason God brought her to this Kingdom. She then said she would go to the King and "if I perish, I perish."

Song: "Lead Me, Guide Me"

Esther and her handmaidens then fasted for three days. Dressed in her queenly apparel she slowly and fearfully made her way to the council chamber of the King. The host of officials and Princes gathered there were hushed as she approached the throne. The

King's countenance darkened in anger. She spoke not, but humbly touched her crown and robe, reminding him of a promise made long ago. The King's face softened as he looked upon his sweet and beautiful Queen. He extended to her the Golden Scepter of pardon saying, "What wilt thou, Queen Esther? What is thy request? It shall be yours up to half the Kingdom." She placed her hand upon the Golden Scepter and knew that her people would be saved.

This story reminds us that no one knows what role we may be called upon to perform in order to preserve the land of the free, the home of the brave. Let us be loyal to kind and friends, to our Country and to our god.

Song: God Bless, America

(This was performed as a play with several "acts" with characters and props and a gong between each "act")