

throughout the ages by those wise persons, the “Masters,” in the sense of both skilled persons and teachers.



Her articles brought Madame Blavatsky considerable notoriety, and her ideas on occultism — a word she helped to make familiar to the world — heightened interest in what was to become the Theosophical Society. Men and women of note attended her soirees in New York City. At one of those sessions, on 7 September 1875, a talk by G. H. Felt on “The Lost Canon of Proportion of the Egyptians” led to a decision to form a society for the study of such subjects. “The Theosophical Society” was chosen as the name of the new organization. According to tradition, it was selected by those present who just flipped through a dictionary to find an appropriate term.

The Theosophical Society was intended to be eclectic, that is, to reflect the traditions of a number of sources and not to be limited to any single one. Its members were not restricted to any single approach, nor expected to subscribe to any creed. Several meetings were held to frame and pass rules, and an emblem was adopted as the seal of the Society. On 17 November 1875, Colonel Olcott gave his inaugural address as president of the society, and this date is therefore still remembered as the Foundation Day of the Theosophical Society.

In 1877, H. P. Blavatsky published her first major work, the two-volume *Isis Unveiled*, which, she said, was “the fruit of somewhat intimate acquaintance with Eastern adepts and study of their science.” Its success was immediate and widespread around the world, attracting many persons to membership in the Society, despite the fact that it is a disorganized text, and