



Welcome to the
York Rite

Curious about the York Rite?

Brother,

Congratulations! Today you took another step in your search for light. You answered the call ... but will you be chosen?

Ancient Craft Masonry has been rightfully defined as that which deals with the Loss, Recovery, Preservation and Defense of a Word.

To the Symbolic or Craft Mason the Loss is exemplified in the Master Mason's degree. That which was lost is recovered and well explained to those exalted as Royal Arch Masons in the Chapter. How that word is preserved is known only to those who have been greeted Select Masters in the Cryptic Rite and those dubbed Knights in the Knights Templar have taken vows to defend it from those who would defile it.

These lessons and more await you in the York Rite. You will find many questions from your Blue Lodge degrees answered here, for the York Rite's degrees interleave, chronologically, with those of the Blue Lodge and fill in many of the gaps in information that you may have found. And like Blue Lodge, the York Rite is rich in allegory ... you will discover many more lessons and mysteries to unravel.

To be clear, as a Master Mason, *you are already a York Rite Mason*. By joining and participating in the Chapter, Council and Commandery, you have the opportunity to deepen your understanding of the history and teachings of the Blue Lodge and to gain more insight into what "Masonic tradition informs us ...".

Will you join us?

Fraternally,

James H. Hodge
Most Excellent General Grand High Priest, 2017-20
General Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons International



David R. Grindle
Most Puissant General Grand Master, 2017-20
General Grand Council of Cryptic Masons, International



Jeffrey N. Nelson,
Most Eminent Grand Master, 2018-21
Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America



What is the York Rite?

The York Rite is a collection of ten Masonic degrees and orders. These are conferred in the United States under a trilateral system of governance consisting of *Chapters*, *Councils*, and *Commanderies*. The name derives from the City of York where, according to early documents, the first meeting of Masons in England was held in the year 926 A.D.

Each of these bodies is a sovereign entity, with separate Constitution, Officers, and By-laws. Instead of Stated Meetings, a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons holds a “Convocation”; a Council of Cryptic Masons, an “Assembly” and a Commandery of Knights Templar, a “Conclave”. Depending on their schedule, bodies may hold their gatherings together in what is called a “unified meeting”. Bodies also work together in various ways and so are often referred to as one group, such as the “Phoenix York Rite Bodies”. However, it is important to remember that each body remains, administratively, unique.



Like the Blue Lodge, each body also has a corresponding Grand body at the state level, which grants the authority to meet and confer their respective Degrees or Orders. Unlike the Blue Lodge, each Grand body also has a corresponding national body, which assists the states by providing guidance in membership, education and research, and the coordination of each body’s sponsored Charity.

The Essential Theme of the York Rite

The degrees and orders of York Rite Masonry all revolve around one great center—the True Word.

- In the Symbolic Lodge that Word was lost.
- In the Chapter Degrees, you will find the Master’s Word and where it was concealed before the death of Hiram.
- In the Council Degrees, the Word is preserved. You will have a conversation with Hiram Abif about his mortality and discover how and why the Master’s Word was lost, by whom, and for what purpose. .
- In the Orders of the Commandery, the Word is explained. You will assist in rebuilding the 2nd Temple and learn the origins of the Knights Templar. and become a Knight after the tradition of Templary.

The Chapter (Capitular) Degrees



Mark Master—The Mark Master Mason degree forms one of the closest links connecting the old operative Masonry with the present speculative system. In the old operative Guilds each newly admitted craftsman was required to select and record a mark amid impressive ceremonies. The lessons taught in this degree are those of Integrity, Charity, Education and Discipline.

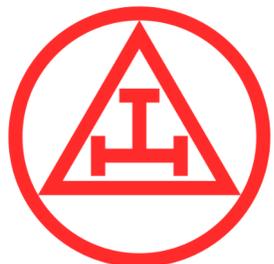


Past Master—The Past Master (Virtual) degree is conferred because of the traditional requirement that only Past Masters of a Blue Lodge may be admitted to Holy Royal Arch. It may aptly be called the degree of responsibility for in this degree the emphasis is placed on the importance of being faithful to our Masonic duties and obligations, a lesson which must be learned before we can enter the Royal Arch and receive the Master's Word.



Most Excellent Master—This degree describes the completion of King Solomon's Temple using factual Masonic history and information contained in the Old Testament. It tells us in ceremonies most solemn, most beautiful, most instructive and impressive the true purpose of man's life and therefore what that life should be ... to further spread the light of Masonry to our lesser informed Brethren..

It also tells us that none but the meritorious and praiseworthy, who through diligence and industry have advanced far toward perfection, and who have been seated in the Oriental Chair by the unanimous suffrages of their Brethren, can be admitted to this degree of Masonry.



Royal Arch—An ancient manuscript states “The Royal Arch Degree has always been considered more august, sublime and important than those which have preceded it and is the very summit of perfection in Ancient Masonry”. With the discoveries of the missing sacred treasure at the rebuilding of the Temple of Solomon, that which was lost in the Master Mason Degree is restored to the Craft in a vivid portrayal of epic events.

Capitular Masonry's Philanthropies



Royal Arch Research Foundation (R.A.R.A.)—Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD, also referred to as Auditory Processing Disorder or APD) occurs when the central nervous system has problems processing information that comes through listening. People with CAPD have difficulty processing auditory input, especially in unfavorable listening environments. They also have problems using auditory information to communicate and learn.

CAPD manifests itself in a number of ways, some of which look like other learning difficulties. Examples include poor performance in listening tasks, understanding speech, developing language, and learning in general, all of which could be symptomatic of other learning disabilities as well.

Auditory processing difficulties can have a tremendous impact on learning, from the ability to absorb content presented verbally to utilizing phonics strategies when reading and spelling.

Dr. Frank Muziek is now heading our CAPD efforts at the University of Arizona. He completed his move in October 2014 and will now have more PhD researchers than at his previous location at the University of Connecticut. He has sponsored international symposiums on CAPD and has put increased emphasis on trying to determine its cause. We continue to assist the Hearing Health Foundation by sponsoring four researchers in CAPD.



Autism Speaks—R.A.R.A. has also committed to \$1,000,000 with Autism Speaks in an effort to correlate signs of CAPD in Toddlers (ages 12 - 36 months) who have Autism.

Autism Speaks is dedicated to promoting solutions, across the spectrum and throughout the lifespan, for the needs of individuals with autism and their families through advocacy and support; increasing understanding and acceptance of autism spectrum disorder; and advancing research into causes and better interventions for autism spectrum disorder and related conditions.

Autism Speaks enhances lives today and is accelerating a spectrum of solutions for tomorrow.

This article is excerpted from the Capitular Development Course by Piers A. Vaughn. And is used with the permission of the General Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, International..

A Brief History of the Royal Arch

The origins of the Royal Arch are hard to determine. There appear to be two major movements. The first suggests that it was imported from Ireland by the Irish Masons living in England — especially around London — and was part of the reason that the Antients seceded from the Moderns, since the latter appeared not to want to work it. This, it is claimed, is why the Antients worked the Degree while the Moderns did not, and why Laurence Dermott called it the "very root, heart and marrow of Freemasonry." This does seem to run into trouble when we study the private correspondence of prominent Moderns, however, and we have already quoted James Heseltine, Grand Secretary of the Moderns from 1769 who wrote that "many of the Fraternity here belong to a Degree in Masonry...called the Royal Arch." So the Degree was by no means unknown to the Moderns, notwithstanding it was not 'officially recognized until the Act of Union in 1813.

We mentioned briefly earlier, there is another view which suggests that, in fact, the Royal Arch not only existed prior to the Third Degree, but that the reason we do not see much mention of it until much later in historical terms is because there was no Royal Arch Degree originally — at least not called by that name — for it was the Installation Ritual of a Master. This becomes a problem, since if we cannot trace it by name, how are we to identify its origins? The answer is, we cannot. However, this does not prevent us from exercising our deductive skills in asking ourselves whether there are any hints of its existence prior to 1717.

Historically, the times leading up to the formation of the Premier Grand Lodge in 1717 were, to say the least, tumultuous! James I of England (VI of Scotland) had come to the throne in 1603, had given us the King James Bible, and was succeeded in 1625 by his son, Charles I. This unfortunate monarch was beheaded in 1649 following the battles with the Cromwellian forces in the civil war of England, and following this regicide, Cromwell ruled as king in all but name, imposing his dour Protestantism upon the English people until 1659.

The restoration of the monarchy came in 1660, and Charles II ascended to the throne. Most of the English were sick and tired of the measures imposed by Cromwell and his supporters. Despite the present day view of the English as being self-controlled and uptight, the opposite was true in those days, and England was known for ribald behavior and merrymaking. Under Cromwell, churchgoing had been compulsory; horse racing and cockfights banned, as were drunkenness and blasphemy. Plays, brothels and gambling houses were banned, and many ale houses closed. It was not long before the public decided they hated armies and Puritanism even more (which is why they came to the United States!).

Life was fun under Charles II, but when James II came to the throne in 1685, his attempt to reintroduce the Roman Catholic faith and to rein in the excesses of his father's reign met with strong opposition, and led to his fleeing the country (and therefore assumed to have abdicated) in 1688, being replaced by

his elder Protestant daughter, Mary II, and her husband William III from Orange, a region of Holland. Their short reigns were followed by the equally short reign of their daughter, Mary, and by 1714 they were already casting around to find another successor, since it was clear that Parliament would not consider any progeny of James II, especially since his son had attempted to invade England thought Scotland in 1708, and again in 1715, the year after George I ascended the throne. His grandson, Bonnie Prince Charlie, or the Young Pretender, also organized an invasion via Scotland in 1745, which was unsuccessful, since he was defeated at the battle of Culloden, and that ended the Jacobite claims to the English throne. George I continued to rule until his death in 1727, during which time he never spoke a word of English.

The point we should draw from all this British history is the incredible state of flux England found itself in during that short period of time. It had gone from an apparently stable monarchy in 1649 through a period of hardship under a Commonwealth run by a virtual dictator (Cromwell) for a period of 10 years. This was followed by a self-indulgent 25 years under Charles II, during which time a great plague affected London in 1665, followed by the Great Fire which razed most of the center of London in 1666. Sir Christopher Wren and others were tasked with rebuilding the city in stone, and suddenly Masons from all over England were invited to come to London to help with the rebuilding, being offered Freedom of the City² by the Crown after seven years of labor. Now, many churches and major buildings had Lodges attached, either to maintain the buildings (one may see this tradition continued today at the cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City) or to rebuild them following the Great Fire of London. It is a fact that Sir Christopher Wren belonged to the Lodge attached to St. Paul's Churchyard. In 1689 the English saw their King depart from England and a new Protestant couple come from Holland to rule them. But at least Mary was of the bloodline of James II. By 1714 Anne was dead and now they took a German prince (in fact Hanoverian, since what is now Germany was a collection of Electorates or local Princes at the time) to be their King. Within a year they were being attacked by Jacobite forces, which were repelled, and within two more years the Premier Grand Lodge was being established.

To the average English native, it must have seemed like the end of the world. For most of them little of consequence had happened on English soil since the Wars of the Roses some two hundred years earlier, and most famous battles had been fought overseas in mainland Europe. But now their land had seen tyrants rule, kings beheaded, plagues, conflagrations, exiles, monarchs seemingly invading from Holland and Germany, all in the space of a few years. Each change in government brought new foes, and those who were one's friends, employers or work colleagues could be the 'enemy' the following year.

The atmosphere at that time was perhaps not unlike the McCarthy period in America, where everyone in this case was looking at their neighbor, wondering if they were secretly harboring sympathies for the exiled Jacobite Royal family! No wonder the new Grand Lodge felt it necessary both to show clear loyalty for the King (while their antecedents were most likely to have been supporters of the house of Stuart), and divest themselves of any indication that they

might have had prior connections to earlier royal dynasties. For one thing, it was important that their history began then, in 1717, after the attempted revolutions ...

Imagine being born into a wealthy family in London, say in 1640, under an apparently stable monarchy. You saw your monarch executed when you were 9 years old, and lived the next 10 years of your life in fear of persecution as being a Cavalier (we all remember the famous painting “And when did you last see your father” by William Frederick Yeames, portraying the young boy standing before his Roundhead inquisitors). At 19 the monarchy is restored and life seems to be good! Any yet within five years your very life is being threatened with a deadly plague, and a year later to you see your beloved city burn to the ground. Fortunately, being of wealthy stock you spent most of 1665 on the country estate, and in 1666 you have returned to a stone mansion on the outskirts of London City. During this period you enjoy the blessing of nearly twenty peaceful and entertaining years, and then, when you turn 49 the King departs and you see a succession of three foreign monarchs within the space of a few years, and throughout this time you are under suspicion of being a possible Jacobite sympathizer. You have to watch everything you say and do, the company you keep, where you travel, how you live. There are spies everywhere. And every time the Pretenders attempt to invade England the hysteria breaks out again. Finally in 1715, when you turn the great old age of 65, you find yourself one final time having to prove your loyalty. You had been a Freemason for many years, and it mattered not that you spoke not at all about politics in Lodge: despite the wonderful times you spent, and the deep philosophical discussions you enjoyed, you were aware that your friends in Lodge comprised both Protestants and Catholics, and this was a factor which drove the need to tile the meetings and keep your conversations secret. Finally, in your winter years, you see the Craft you so enjoyed as a haven from all the nonsense going on around you during your life transformed into a shadow of its earlier self a body determined to seek patronage from the incumbent royal family, and prove its loyalty to a little know minor German prince. Part of this process include pretending you didn't exist prior to this time; and ... by abandoning some of the most beautiful teachings of Freemasonry.

Of course this image is fictitious; but it is intended to show some of the currents behind why the new Grand Lodge might have decided to invent a new ritual — the Third Degree — which records indicate strongly was not created until the mid-1720s; and deemphasize some of the colorful ritual associated with earlier times.

A close study of the Third Degree clearly shows that it is incomplete. It ends with the conferral of a substitute word and substitute actions, and given that the whole of Freemasonry emphasizes the importance of the numbers three, and the fact that this number features so heavily in its symbolism, it makes almost no sense that the crowning moment of the Master Mason Degree should involve two men grappling as if seeking to find comfort in one another while they whisper a seemingly meaningless word into each other's ear. Once we arrive at the Royal Arch Degree we see the importance of the number three restored, as well as a the word; and instead of groping almost blindly at one another, three men now come together in an elegant manner to exchange what is no longer a meaningless word, but perhaps the most important word in Western

history. The first thought that many new Masons have when they have completed the Third Degree is: when do I get the *real* word?

There are two main hypotheses concerning the Royal Arch Degree. Either it was the completion of the earlier Master Mason Degree; or it was an Installed Master Degree, which a Fellowcraft elected to govern a Lodge received in order to qualify him for the position, when there was only one Master Mason — the Mason who rules his Lodge.

Now, the main objections point to the fact that it is well-known the Third Degree did not come into existence until the mid-1720s. Surely, then, if the Third Degree didn't exist prior to that time, the Royal Arch could not have existed either? However, an alternative explanation could be that what the Grand Lodge was attempting to do was to replace the *existing* Third Degree.

Now, the completely fictitious story of Hiram's death was introduced (nowhere is it mentioned in the Bible) and a new word and signs substituted to create a completely new Degree. To do this the old Degree, which contained a straightforward story of the Temple's completion and the conferral of the True Master's Word had to be dropped. This new Third Degree had to be presented as though it was 'new' and was not replacing anything which had come before. Consider the important questions which are currently asked at the opening of all Festive Boards in England, which indicate there were Three Grand Lodges, the first being the Holy Lodge at the foot of Mount Horeb, the Second or Sacred Lodge held on Mount Moriah by King Solomon, and the Third or Royal Lodge held in Jerusalem, and presided over by Zerubbabel (we shall see this in more detail later). There is every evidence from its separation from the rest of the ritual and from the fact that it is in form of a catechism — an early device — that it may be of great antiquity. If so, and if the Royal Arch was based on the story of Zerubbabel, it would make sense for the 'new' Third Degree to be based upon the story of the Second Grand Lodge, which had been formed for the purpose of building King Solomon's Temple. By homing in on an earlier Biblical event perhaps the intention was to make the 'new' Degree appear older; just as the Antients who formed in opposition to the practices of the Premier Grand Lodge took that title to give the impression that they had been around longer (and perhaps, if the Royal Arch was the senior Degree, in principle they had)?

Further, Gerhard Schott's huge set of King Solomon's Temple, designed for Christian Hienrich Postel's opera in Hamburg about the destruction of the Temple, had been displayed in a number of European cities following the production. One of these was London, where it was on display for a number of years, where it no doubt caught the attention of Freemasons of the time. An engraving of the design also became the most common depiction of Solomon's Temple in Bibles printed in England for nearly 100 years, and also featured hanging on the wall in numerous Masonic engravings of the mid- to late 1700s. Which this double influence of a physical representation of the Temple exhibited in London, and the Royal Arch catechism, we have two possible sources of the 'new', or what a number of contemporaries called the 'casual' Master Mason Degree. So we can conclude that there was possibly a movement around the time that the Grand Lodge was

established in 1717 to create a Third Degree which was not associated with the previous roots, and indeed within a handful of years this new society was attracting both aristocracy and even members of the (new) Royal family. It is therefore no surprise that a number of contemporary Freemasons who lived in and around London, but whose roots were decidedly more pro-Stuart — especially those of Irish decent, who remembered their country's Masonry — should consider the adoption of a new Degree, at the expense of one they held dear, one of the major reasons they decided to seceded and for their own, Antient, Grand Lodge.

The Royal Arch in the United States

As we have seen, much of this was either unknown or a matter of indifference to American Freemasons. The have seen that the first global reference to a Royal Arch Meeting was in Fredericksburg, VA in December 1753. We also know that many Lodges were established by Antient Charters or by traveling military groups which established Lodges which would have practiced the Antient Degrees. To this we can add those who had traveled to Europe, to England, France, Spain, Germany, Ireland and Scotland, for pleasure or trade, and either joined Lodges there or visited Lodges having been initiated in the colonies; and who brought back their experiences of visiting those Lodges and Chapters. Finally, we know that a number of groups were practicing Royal Arch rituals prior to the establishment of the General Grand Chapter in 1797 and the codification of the rituals by Thomas Smith Webb. For example, there is evidence that Independent Royal Arch Lodge, No. 2, in New York City was practicing a form of Royal Arch Ritual early on; and Ancient Chapter No. 1, formerly Old Chapter, whose origin tradition fixes to be 1763, since its early records were lost through fire. 'Old Chapter' was old enough to refuse immediate admission to the Grand Chapter of New York when it formed in March 1798, and had issued its *own* Charters to Chapters in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut *prior* to that date. The new Grand Chapter held it in sufficiently high regard to keep the number '1' open until such time as it decided to join eight years later, in 1806.

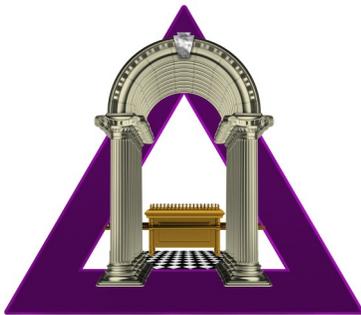
We are therefore fortunate that our roots are heavily in the Antient tradition, since the Royal Arch was largely lost and forgotten by the Moderns by then, while the tradition of preserving the True Word was very much alive in the former Grand Body and its missionaries, the military Lodges.



The Council (Cryptic) Degrees

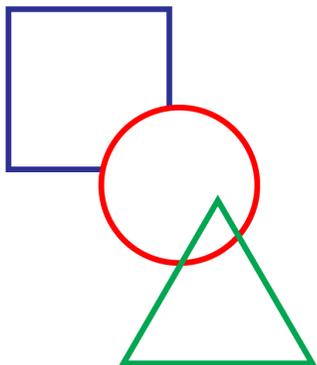


Royal Master—This is the first of the Council degrees. It is conferred in a place known as the council chamber, which represents the private apartment of King Solomon's Temple, where he and his two associates met for consultation and deliberation during the construction of the Temple, and the drama portrayed in it sheds additional light on both the Master Mason and Royal Arch degrees. It and the following degree are essential to a clear understanding of the events of one section of the Royal Arch.



Select Master—In the Select Master's degree which is the second of the Council the place of meeting represents a "Secret Vault" or crypt beneath the Temple. Fidelity is rewarded and the candidate is taught to guard the secrets of the degree with sleepless vigilance. The degree also commemorates the deposits of an important secret or treasure which, after the preliminary preparations, is said to have been made by our three Grand Masters.

Without the Royal and Select Master degrees, neither the Master Mason degree nor the Royal Arch degree is complete, for they rationally account for the concealment and preservation of the treasures revealed in the Royal Arch.



Super Excellent Master—This degree was not originally a part of the Cryptic system, and is not in all jurisdictions as yet. It has one of the best written rituals in Masonry. It deals with the incidents in the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar when Zedekiah, the last King of Judah, was conquered and carried captive to Babylon. It enlarges upon the section of the Royal Arch having to do with the capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonian King, and teaches in most dramatic fashion the lesson of fidelity. The ritual teaches beautiful lessons on the death and ascension of our Savior and the candidate is at last received into full fellowship in the most solemn manner.

The Super-Excellent Master is an honorary degree, to which any Cryptic Masons is entitled by virtue of his being in good standing in his Council. This is classed as the most dramatic and spectacular degree in all of the Masonic systems.

Cryptic Masonry's Philanthropies



Cryptic Masons Medical Research Foundation—The Cryptic Masons Medical Research Foundation (CMMRF) supports the Indiana Center for Vascular Biology and Medicine, (ICVBM), located at the Indiana University School of Medicine and the Richard Roudebush Veteran's Administration Medical Center located at Indianapolis Indiana.

Because blood vessels are important in maintaining the health or repairing almost all tissues, practically all diseases turn out to have a vascular component connected to their origin or remediation. Diabetes, stroke, poor circulation, heart failure, wound healing, and many other diseases share the common denominator of blood vessels. Centering our contributions to an organization that addresses so many different health concerns, both nationally and internationally, allows our supporters to share in the medical advancements, regardless of geography.



Dr. Michael P. Murphy

Through the basic and clinical research, conducted by ICVBM and supported by CMMRF, advancements are being made to discover cures for many of today's health problems, prevent major diseases, and finally to save lives. We invite you to become a part of this team and join our partnership in discovery. Let's do something great together!



Dr. Carmella Evans-Molina

CMMRF funding currently supports the research of Doctors Michael P. Murphy and Carmella Evans-Molina. Dr. Murphy is leading the way of discovery research in the use of adult stem cells to repair and replace blood vessels through vascular research. Dr. Evans-Molina is pursuing alternative approaches, through adult stem cells, toward finding a solution to diabetes.

There is something in CMMRF for just about every mature adult. Rare indeed is the individual whose life has not been touched by a physical ailment under research by the Indiana Center for Vascular Biology and Medicine. The Board encourages each Cryptic Mason to actively promote and support this tremendous philanthropy

Sir Knight Fricks served Crusade Commandery No. 23, Haddonfield, New Jersey, as Eminent Commander and the Grand Commandery of New Jersey as Grand Historian. This work is used with his permission.

An Alternative Explanation of the Royal and Select Master Degrees

by Sir Knight Gene Fricks

The legends behind the ritual of the Royal and Select Masters degrees are among those with only a vague basis in biblical antecedents. Unlike the legend of Hiram and the building of the first temple or that of Zerubabel and the second temple, we have only a passing mention of Adoniram as the first overseer of King Solomon and a listing of Solomon's chief officers in I Kings 4:4. We do not find the secret passageway or the nine arches described in the II Kings story of the temple's construction.

Recognizing that the writers of the original rituals were men steeped in classical learning, we should look elsewhere for the source of this story. I suggest that the writings of the 15th century Arab historian, Mudjir ad-Din, may have been that source.

What prompted this thought was the celebration of the 3000th anniversary of Jerusalem several years ago and the renewed interest in its ruins that the commemoration sparked.

Let us review some of Jerusalem's history after the Roman destruction of Herod's Temple in 70 A.D. to set some background. Titus and his son Vespasian conquered Jerusalem after a long and bloody siege. Determined to bring the recalcitrant Jews to heel, the Roman 10th Legion, left to garrison the city, were ordered to level the temple down to its foundations. What we see today in Jerusalem is the temple mount platform upon which the temple sat, all that remains of Herod's imposing construction project.

As part of the effort to obliterate a Jewish identity, the city was renamed Aelia Capitolina. The Roman emperors Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius had constructed on the platform a temple to their pagan deity, Jupiter. With the conversion of the Emperor Constantine to Christianity, his mother, Helen, herself a devout Christian, spent four years in Jerusalem attempting to identify and

rebuild many of the structures associated with her faith. The Byzantines made the Church of the Holy Sepulcher their religious focus in the city and ignored the temple mount, using the platform as a garbage dump.

With the conquest of Jerusalem by the Arabs about 645 A.D., a renewed effort to restore the temple mount was undertaken. The temple mount is as sacred to Moslems as it is to Jews, for

they share the same ancestor, Abraham. Moslems however, claim that it was on the mount that the angel of the Lord stayed Abraham's hand from sacrificing his son Ishmael (not Isaac). Ishmael is the hereditary ancestor of the Arab peoples. It was on the mount that Mohammed was said to have ascended to Heaven. With the focus of sanctity again on the temple mount, the Arabs undertook to construct the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Asqa Mosque.

Beneath the temple mount platform is substantial construction begun during the Maccabean period and extended during Herod's construction. An aqueduct supported on arches and bridges brought water into the structure, and numerous bridges and passageways lie beneath the platform. These, the Arabs sought to reconstruct. One of the most impressive rooms beneath the platform is what Charles Warren named "Masonic Hall" during his exploration and excavations in 1868. General Sir Charles Warren, in addition to his many military and professional accomplishments, was an ardent Freemason and a Select Master. It was due to his efforts in the last century that structures that had lain in darkness for centuries were brought again to the light.

One area that Warren brought to light he called the "Secret Passage," a long, narrow east-west passage.

Mudjir ad-Din had described this secret passage which he wrongly attributed to King David who reputedly used the passage to travel from his palace at the Citadel near the Jaffa Gate to the temple without mixing with the common people. As a result of modern archaeology, we no longer place David's (and Solomon's) palace at the citadel.

Adjacent to the passageway on the north are a series of vaults that originally supported the aqueduct and served as cisterns for water storage. The lower part of the vaults in the secret passage rests on remains from the Maccabean period (1st century B.C.). The Romans had tried to destroy it. The bridge was not restored until after the Arab conquest. One of the largest vaults, almost twenty feet high, was Warren's Masonic Hall. Despite the damage of two earthquakes during the intervening centuries, the outer wall of the Masonic Hall is partially preserved on the northern and eastern side. It is build of ashlar cut in the same meticulous manner as the ones on the western wall of the temple mount. Other structures that used this particular form of construction were of extreme religious and public importance during the Herodian period, but we have no idea for what purpose "Masonic Hall" was built.

What of the Ninth Arch? There are nine arches that carried the aqueduct above the secret passageway and that are preserved. Of course, at the point where the aqueduct entered the western wall of the temple mount, there is the most impressive Wilson's Arch, named for Warren's co-explorer, Charles Wilson. The secret passageway is blocked by the abutment formed by one wall of this arch, so it could not have been used for access to the Temple in any event. After their re-conquest of Jerusalem from the Crusaders in 1244, the Arabs built eight gates to the temple mount from the west and erected additional religious buildings on the mount to emphasize its Moslem character. This required the Arabs to construct enormous substructures

to support these new buildings and raise them up to the height of the temple mount. It is likely that during the extended construction period, extensive explorations were carried out by the Arabs, if for no other reason than to assure the integrity of their new buildings. During this period, they repaired earthquake damage to "Masonic Hall" and the arches. It is also likely that Mudjir ad-Din would have been exposed to the structures to create his history.

As a side note, in the period after its reunification of Jerusalem, the Israeli government has undertaken excavations to expand Warren's work, clearing out much of what was left of the Moslem structures along the western wall of the mount. Much of this had fallen into ruin as a result of neglect and earthquake damage. Proceeding north along the wall, there is a strange large hall built in the form of a four-armed cross supported by four enormous pillars. However, the room was not constructed by the Crusaders as it was used as the foundation for a Moslem religious school.

Warren did not explore past the Cruciform Hall in his excavations, so it was left to the Israelis to continue a narrow tunnel to the east, nine hundred feet long but only six or eight feet wide. This tunnel eventually meets the original pavement and travels along the original street for a considerable distance. What is most striking is the quality and size of the masonry work on the western wall of the mount. Some of this has been exposed for the first time in over a thousand years.

Each stone is fully dressed with carved margins and central embossing. Every stone therefore, has three margins. While the stones average in height about four feet, at one point about sixty feet north of Wilson's Arch, we come to what the archaeologists called the "Master Course." Here the stones are eleven feet tall, and the largest is forty-two feet long. Ultrasonic testing indicates that the stone is fourteen feet thick. The weight of the stone is estimated at six hundred tons. Remember that these stones were placed without the benefit of machines, with only pulleys available to aid in their placement. Another stone is forty feet long and a third is twenty-five feet. The smallest stone is six feet long. Altogether, this portion of the wall is over one hundred feet long but composed of only four stones. What was Herod's purpose in constructing so massive a wall?

It is easy to see where the stones were quarried as the quarry is at the end of the tunnel on the extreme northwest corner of the mount. Apparently, in leveling the mount to construct the platform, the builders used the materials right at hand. However, the ultrasound testing provides an intriguing clue. Apparently on the other side of this wall is an enormous hall. Without the enormous wall, Herod's builders would have had to use flying buttresses which had not yet been invented. Why a hall here? Was it to ease the weight of the fill required to level the mount? Was there a large storage area beneath the mount for the use of the temple priests? However, we do not know how wide the hall is, and archaeologists are not likely to be given authorization to excavate to find out, as to do so would offend the sensibilities of the Moslem world. Tunneling beneath the Dome of the Rock would likely lead to war.

The foundation stone of Solomon's temple lies below the Dome of the Rock. This is apparently the stone that the builders rejected. It was too large to move so its top surface was leveled off and used as the cornerstone of the building. Beneath the rock is an open chamber that was used in the medieval period and perhaps before as a prayer chamber. The Crusaders cut a hole through the foundation stone to allow the smoke from their votary candles to escape. On the top of the rock are two carved areas. One is a rectangle of just the dimensions to have fit the Ark of the Covenant. The other is a low relief carving that looks suspiciously like a keystone. It is not possible to determine when this carving was made or by whom.

Early in the 20th century, there was much interest and energy expended in discovering the sources of the Cryptic Rite ritual. There seemed to be general agreement that the Select Master degree had been manufactured to describe the activities of Charles Stuart, the pretender to the English throne, and his friend, Louis XVI, king of France, in the person of Hiram of Tyre and Solomon. The council of three times nine were taken to represent the close supporters who had escaped to France with Charles. Thus the Select Master degree was a side degree to the 14th degree of the Scottish Rite. Until fairly recently, most Masonic writers seemed to accept that the Scottish Rite system had been formulated in France from among the supporters of the Stuarts. What has laid this tale to rest was a discovery that Charles Stuart, by his own admission, had never been a Freemason.

Under the old viewpoint, the Antients formulated the Royal Arch degree in competition with the Cryptic Rite to give the Masonic supporters of the Hanoverian king of England their own degree. Thomas Dunckerly was supposed to have removed the true word from the Master Mason degree, providing it with a substitute. The Antients' Royal Arch degree also drew on the 14th and 15th degrees of the Scottish Rite for its story line and symbolism.

The Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in Charleston, South Carolina was the original possessor of the Royal and Select degrees in the United States. These were considered side degrees and as such, were under the jurisdiction of the Rite of Perfection. Henry Andrew Francken brought them with him in 1767 from France and conferred them upon Samuel Stringer, who afterward moved to Maryland, and to Moses M. Hayes, who afterward became Grand Master of Massachusetts. Hayes apparently disseminated the degrees through Massachusetts and nearby states. In 1815 a Council was formed in New Hampshire.

Joseph Myers, at the foundation of the Council of Princes of Jerusalem at Charleston in 1778, deposited a copy of these degrees in its archives, and they were conferred in 1783 in the Lodge of Perfection in Charleston. Given the condition of the Scottish Rite degrees as found and rewritten by Albert Pike, we can only wonder what the early Royal and Select degrees looked like.

Joseph Cerneau brought them in 1807 from France to New York and established a Grand Council there. This Grand Council refused to recognize those receiving the degrees from any other source. However, its subordinates outside of New York united with Councils chartered from other sources. In this Grand Council, the Super Excellent Master degree was one of the series and was conferred in its subordinate Councils at an early date. Cerneau is regarded as something of a Masonic charlatan for his role in founding the Grand Commandery in New York when he had never received the Templar orders. His association with the founding of the Grand Council lead to interesting confusion in the middle decades of the 19th century.

In 1817, the degrees were conferred in Baltimore on the members of the General Grand Chapter, Royal Arch Masons. One of the recipients was Thomas Smith Webb of Boston who was Deputy General Grand High Priest and the formulator of the Mark and Most Excellent Master degrees. He returned north to confer the degrees on others who disseminated the degrees through Massachusetts, Vermont, and New York in 1818.

Jeremy L. Cross, Grand Lecturer of the General Grand Chapter, received the Select Master degree in 1816 from Philip P. Eckel in Baltimore and received authorization to communicate the degree to Royal Arch Masons, without fee, wherever he might travel. He claimed to have received dispensation from the Past Grand Master of the Grand Council of Select Masons at Baltimore to grant dispensations to form independent Councils of Select Masters. The Grand Council of Select Masters was established at Baltimore by a Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Maryland; it did not survive him. Cross established thirty-three councils, including Brearley Council at Bridgeton, New Jersey on September 29, 1817, with James Giles as Thrice Illustrious Grand Master; William R. Fithian, Deputy Illustrious Grand Master; and Isaac R. Hampton, Principal Conductor. Each of these worthies was a member of Brearly Lodge No. 2 and Brearley Chapter, Royal Arch Masons. These were distinguished Freemasons in New Jersey.

James Giles was made a Mason sometime between 1776-1782 in a military lodge. In 1783, at age twenty-four, he was elected Worshipful Master of St. John's Lodge No. 2 in New York City. This was the year that the occupying British evacuated the city. In 1784 Giles was Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of New York. In 1790 he co-founded Brearley Lodge in Bridgeton and served it as Worshipful Master from 1790-1800 and 1812-1816. In 1815 he was elected Junior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of New Jersey and served as Grand Master from 1817-1819. A member of Harmony Chapter No. 52, Royal Arch Masons, in Philadelphia, he co-founded Brearley Chapter on October 16, 1815, and served as High Priest 1816-1819. On July 8, 1816, with Jeremy Cross in attendance, at a regular meeting of Brearley Lodge, Giles constituted Brearley Council of Royal and Select Masters.

William R. Fithian was raised at Brearley Lodge and elected Junior Warden in 1813. He served the lodge as Worshipful Master in 1817 and again in 1825. Exalted in Brearley Chapter in 1816, he served the chapter in various stations until 1827.

Isaac Hampton served Brearley Lodge as Worshipful Master in 1820-1821, 1834-1835, and 1840-1849. He was elected Senior Grand Warden in 1826-1827 and Grand Master of Masons in New Jersey 1828-1829.¹

Jeremy Cross is perhaps better known for having developed the idea of the symbol of the broken column, the weeping virgin, and Father Time to represent a fallen brother.

In 1829 James Cushman, also an itinerant lecturer and possibly an associate of Cross, went to Virginia and granted dispensations to form seven or eight Councils in various parts of that state. In 1820 a sufficient number of Councils existed in Virginia to form a Grand Council which continued until 1841. At that time, the Grand Council learned what had transpired in Maryland and, wishing to dissociate themselves from what was regarded as a fraud (no matter how innocently perpetrated), dissolved itself. Afterward, the Virginia Grand Chapter assumed jurisdiction over the Cryptic degrees.

The Royal and Select degrees had originally been brought to the United States in 1783 and placed under the control of the Supreme Council, 330. Mackey indicated that charters were given by representatives of the Supreme Council. The Royal and Select Councils eventually transferred their allegiance to the state Grand Councils. The constitution of the southern jurisdiction Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite actually contains a provision that the Supreme Council will exercise control over Royal and Select councils in states where no Grand Council exists. Every Sovereign Grand Inspector General in the southern jurisdiction would be a member of the Grand Council created under their auspices. This actually was the case in Mississippi in 1828.

The Northern Scottish Rite Supreme Council neither claimed nor exercised such powers, leaving the entire matter to the Grand Councils. The Grand Council of Pennsylvania was formed in 1847.



The Most Puissant Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of the State of New Jersey was constituted at New Brunswick on November 26, 1860. At its sixth Annual Assembly in 1864, the Grand Council of New Jersey adopted the form of the Royal and Select degrees as practiced by the Grand Council of Connecticut and added the Super Excellent Master degree.

The Commandery (Chivalric) Orders



Illustrious Order of the Red Cross—The first order conferred in the chivalric system is the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross and the story contained within predates the era of the Crusades. The candidate represents Zerubbabel who is well familiar to the Royal Arch Mason (a requirement for admission) at the time of King Darius. Zerubbabel visits the king in order to convince him of his commitment to the Jewish people and in the process is asked to take part in a debate over which has greatest sway in the kingdom - wine, women or the king. The end result of the debate being the candidate offering a fourth option and an excellent argument is made on the power of Truth.



Order of Malta—This is the first of the Christian Orders contained in the Chivalric system and relates the story of St. Paul's arrival on the island of Melita which we know today as Malta. In the next portion of the Order the history of the Knights of St. John (Knights of Malta) is explained and the periods of the Order's history are paralleled with the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. While Freemasonry often comes under attack by fundamentalists who view it as unchristian, the candidate for admission into this Christian order can offer clear argument to the contrary.



Order of the Temple—The Order of the Temple is the most beautiful in the series. During the ceremonies the candidate represents a knight of the era that succeeded the Crusades and vowed to visit the Holy Sepulcher. As a trial of his worthiness he is assigned seven years of preparation. At the end of this preparation he is made a Knight and a member of the Order.

The ritual teaches beautiful lessons on the death and ascension of our Savior and the candidate is at last received into full fellowship in the most solemn manner. Unlike most branches of Freemasonry, wherein the Candidate need not follow a particular faith, the Chivalric Orders of Masonry require a belief in the doctrine of the Trinity. That is to say he must profess a faith in Christianity.

Chivalric Masonry's Philanthropies



As a Knight Templar, one has many opportunities to help others that are less fortunate. One way is through the Knights Templar Eye Foundation. The Eye Foundation is a great humanitarian charity whose purpose is to provide research, surgical treatment and hospitalization to those who suffer from diseases or injury to the eyes. Cross-eye, which occurs in children under 16, is one affliction that can lead to blindness if not treated properly. Questions or comments regarding the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc. can send e-mail to: ktef@knightstemplar.org.



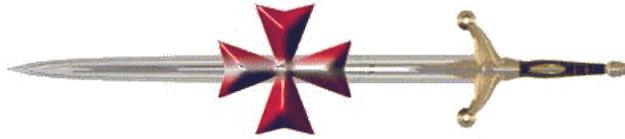
The Knights Templar Educational foundation provides financial assistance to students who meet the required qualifications, which may vary from state to state.

The foundation considers all applications for scholarships, without regard to age, race, religion, National origin, gender, of Masonic ties or affiliations. These scholarships are not "grants in aid", but are open to all students regardless of their financial circumstances.



In addition to the many religious observances throughout the year, The Grand Encampment of Knights Templar sponsors an annual "Holy Land Pilgrimage." The purpose of the pilgrimage is to send a Christian Ministers to the Holy Land to enhance their ministries. Each jurisdiction raises funds to send these ministers, expenses paid, on these trips. Masonic membership is not required and male and female ministers are eligible.

The following articles are excerpted from Templar Keynotes Nos. 1—6, prepared by the Committee on Ritualistic Matters of the Grand Commandery of PA under the authority of SK Errol V Hawksley, REGC. SK Hawksley is currently a member of St. Andrews Commandery No. 17 in Peoria, AZ. This work is used with his permission



A Brief History of the Knights Templar

Every Knight Templar is a Mason but not every Mason is a Knight Templar.

The fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons is the largest, oldest and most widely known fraternal organization in the world. Thousands of books have been written about it. Yet, to most of the people of the world, the Masonic Fraternity remains a mystery.

The term "Knights Templar" describes the members of the Commandery, which exists as the final stage in the York Rite of Freemasonry. The first three degrees of Freemasonry are a basic requirement for joining the York Rite.

Modern day Knights Templar trace their origins to the medieval time of AD 1118, when they were called "Poor Fellow Soldiers of Christ and the Temple of Solomon." These ancient Templars were a military and religious order founded in Jerusalem during the Crusades. The founders were Hugh de Payens and Geoffrey de Saint-Omer, knights who established a religious community to protect pilgrims in the Holy Land. Baldwin II, Latin King of Jerusalem, gave them a dwelling on the ancient site of King Solomon's Temple. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux drew up the Order's rules, which included the notion of fighting the enemies of God under vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The Templars, segregated into knights, chaplains, sergeants, and craftsman, were organized under a Grand Master and general council and were responsible only to the Pope and not to secular rulers. Wearing a white cloak with a Red Cross, they attracted many nobles and soon became an expert military force and a powerful and wealthy order. In Europe their churches were often round, and their Commanderies served as banks. After 1291, when the crusading forces were driven from Palestine, the Templars' main activity became banking--the lending of money (even to kings)--and their enormous landholdings and financial strength aroused great hostility among rulers and clergy alike.

Philip IV of France, sorely in need of money, charged the Templars with heresy and immorality in 1307. The Templars were arrested and put on trial, and confessions were extracted only by torture. Similar attacks were mounted against the order in Spain and England, and Pope Clement

V, after initially opposing the trials, suppressed the Knights Templar by papal bull at the Council of Vienne in 1312. When Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, and other leaders of the Templars retracted their forced confessions and declared their innocence and the innocence of the order, Philip had them burned at the stake in Paris on March 18, 1314.

The Templars' holdings were dispersed, some going to the Knights Hospitalers and some to secular rulers, although Philip received none. The guilt of the Templars was hotly debated down to the 20th century. Most modern scholars, however, believe that the charges against them were fabricated.

In modern times, the warlike spirit of the Order has passed away; replaced by a spirit of refined moral chivalry, which prompts all of its members to be ever ready to defend the weak, the innocent, the helpless and the oppressed. In a brother's cause we are to do all that may be demanded by manhood and fraternity. These convictions become a reality by the charitable deeds resulting from the Knights Templar Eye and Educational Foundations and the Holy Land Pilgrimage.



Grandfather's Sword

There are many things which may attract our attention and make Templary a unique and worthy goal. These things may take many forms: an item, a symbol, a word, a principle, or even someone's action. Do you remember when you were first called to Templary?

As we look at the following story told by one Sir Knight, put yourself in the place of the teller. View the story through his eyes and, as the adventure unfolds, in your own mind's eye, make these images your own. Let the experience also be your experience ...

“If I were to take a retrospective view of Freemasonry, I would have to journey back in the memory of time to those recesses of childhood many, many years ago and catch hold of my earliest images of that thing called Templary. The journey would take me up flights of stairs to a place which was forbidden to a child of four or five years. It would take me to a dark corner of an unlit and locked closet in the attic of my home, where grandfather kept some of his special things. Each Sunday, Grandfather would visit and officiate at dinner. He would occasionally visit his closet. Perhaps because it was forbidden, it was all the more interesting to know about. The aura of mystery made examining the contents of that closet all the more necessary. So began the venture ...

“The first opportunity provided just a glimpse, when one afternoon, the closet was open and I was able to peek past Grandpa to begin unraveling the mystery. Beyond the row of winter coats,

back in the corner, leaning against the wall, was a package wrapped in newspaper and bound up by string. Having finished his business, the closet was locked and the secret was once more obscured.

“I had to know the contents of whatever was wrapped in that newspaper. Perhaps this was to be a preview of future lessons, for are we not taught to ask, to seek the truth, that truth shall carry the victory? In my childish curiosity, I inquired what was kept in the closet. All I was told was it was 'Masonic.' That forbidden closet and its secret were locked away. As time went by, the key to the closet, which hung from a string at the top of the door frame, came within reach—with the help of a chair. One day, I can remember carefully making my way up to the attic, taking down the key, and anxiously opening the closet. I had entered the 'holy of holies' and that *sanctum sanctorum* was about to yield up the very secrets of Masonry. Carefully, I untied the string and opened the paper wrapping and, finding a leather case, unlatched it and drew from within a shining sword. The handle was a knight's head and upon the blade was a scene of charging knights on horseback. There were tents and a skull and crossed bones and fancy engraving in the center of which was my grandfather's name. Just as carefully as I had opened it, I returned the sword to its case, wrapped it again in the newspaper and left everything as I had found it. The sword was, for me, a source of mystery and romantic adventure and, one day, I knew I would be a Knight Templar.”

No doubt, we can each tell a tale of our personal adventure, a quest to unravel the mystery which Masonry presents. Some, perhaps, look at Masonry as a way of solving the mystery of life, as though it could be deciphered. They would then have a code that they could put over their eyes like a pair of 3-D glasses, to reveal that which was not seen. But what is not seen is the Spirit of Templary, which is within the breast of each Knight Templar. It is not to be deciphered, it is to be acted out so it may be seen by others.

To us as Knights Templar, the sword has a utilitarian value. It is presented as a salute to our country's flag, it is at carry when giving instruction, it is at order during prayer, it is inverted during the Apostle's Creed, it is the instrument which sings the proclamation in the Installation of Officers, it is crossed in an arch of steel when receiving the Grand Commander, and it is the voice of authority when declaring the Conclave open.

The sword, furthermore, is a two-edged sword which symbolically teaches us to fight for truth while at the same time cutting out our own imperfections. We are reminded in Ephesians 6:17 to take, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God..." And in Romans 13:4, "But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." In both the Old and the New Testament, we find references to the sword as symbolizing the word of truth; to slay the enemy and to cut through falsehood. Christ also is referred to~ the Word of God, like a two-edged sword, symbolically cutting through to show us the way, the truth and the life.

As Knights Templar, the sword we carry reminds us of our authority as Christians, our quest for truth and the spiritual word above all words. It also demands from us an accountability to stand up for, to take from a popular comic book character, "Truth, Justice, and the American Way".

As the Arthurian legend of the 'Sword in the Stone' provides colorful imagery, so should the Eminent Commander be a shining example of what is expected of every Knight Templar. Each Knight Templar can likewise draw his sword from the mystical stone of Templary and symbolically wield it as he goes forth in everyday life.

While we each may find different images that encouraged our becoming Knights Templar, they are also part of our collective unity that allows us to understanding the meaning of TempJary. Psalm 133 notes "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Our shared experiences should strengthen each of us that we may attract others. Just as grandfather's sword was one Sir Knight's stimulus, so should the unity and fellowship of the Commandery be as shining as an upheld sword, a beacon to welcome others.



In Summary

In the previous pages we have provided a brief overview of the York Rite and its potential for your further enlightenment.

The York Rite legends are included in documents dating as far back as the 10th century. It became identified very early on with Freemasonry as practiced in Britain and transmitted to the American Colonies. The story line of the York Rite degrees, like those of the Symbolic Lodge, is based on the completion and dedication of King Solomon's Temple; and the building of the 2nd Temple.

The degrees continue the themes and practices of operative Masonry as the progressive system of moral instruction to which we have already been introduced in symbolic craft Masonry, and have come to expect as students of our speculative art. The York Rite adds immeasurably to our own personal quest for spiritual and self development.

The degrees and orders of the York Rite can be traced by written records from 1744 with the Royal Arch conferred in York, England to the Knight Templar conferred in Boston in 1769. The Cryptic or Council degrees were not established as part of the York Rite system until well into the 19th Century. But we find during the second half of the 18th century, both the Royal Arch and the Knight Templar degrees described in York lodge records as the 4th and 5th degrees of Masonry respectively, and were said to be conferred as part of a five degree system known as the Early York Rite.

During the early 19th century, the term York Rite came into common usage in early America because there was a need to distinguish the degree system offered by it, from that offered by the Scottish Rite. Because of the growing popularity of both Rites in America, Freemasons made almost daily use of the names of both in their Masonic conversations as a way of distinguishing between the two. Historically, many Freemasons have opted to belong to one or both of these great Rites. The quest of the Master Mason is not complete without them.

Today, the York Rite is known all over the world, and its significance is highly appreciated by all serious students of Masonry.



This booklet was compiled by the Grand York Rite of Arizona

Special Events

York Rite members can choose from a wide variety of events to attend and participate in, beyond those Stated Events. In addition to the normal Conclaves, Assemblies and Convocations each month there will be practices, educational offerings, and community activities to enjoy. Your body's presiding officers or their designates will discuss with you what programs are available and how you can get involved. Some of these occur on a regular basis. Here is a partial list:

- Easter Observance—Commandery observances of Easter, may be opened to the Public
- Local Degree Festivals—there are generally one or more local Degree Festivals where one or more bodies get together to confer the York Rite Degrees and Orders on new Candidates. Check with your local Secretary/Recorder
- Mid-year Meeting—a mid-year meeting of the Grand York Rite Bodies to plan for the annual Grand Sessions. This is open to all interested members and is a great way to meet your Grand Officers. Generally held in March.
- Knights Templar Ball—Annual York Rite formal event, opened to all members and their guests.
- Grand Sessions—the annual meeting of the Grand York Rite Bodies. Similar to Grand Communication. Any York Rite Mason may attend but only Pedestal Officers and Past Presiding Officers may vote.
- Regional Degree Festivals—in addition to local festivals, there are various regional festival that allow you to see work from other states presented. One such festival is the Colorado River Fall festival, a premier annual Festival, York Rite Members from 5 states get together in Laughlin, NV for Degrees and Orders conferral. Generally held in of October.
- Regional Department Conferences—meeting with General Grand Chapter, General Grand Council and Grand Encampment officers from your region to share information, ideas and education (York Rite Leadership Program)..
- Christmas Observance—Commandery observances of Christmas, may be opened to the public.



As with your other Masonic travels, you are encouraged to travel to other Chapters, Councils and Commanderies and share in the unique Friendship and Brotherly Love that is found within the York Rite..

Seek and Ye shall find!

A wise man seeks further light. Masonry has myriad teachings, symbols and learning opportunities. It is nearly impossible to receive and understand them all and many of them are not found in the Blue Lodge. We become Master Masons with a substitute word and the Temple not yet complete. How will we then receive what we need to travel and receive wages to support our families and a distressed, worthy brother?

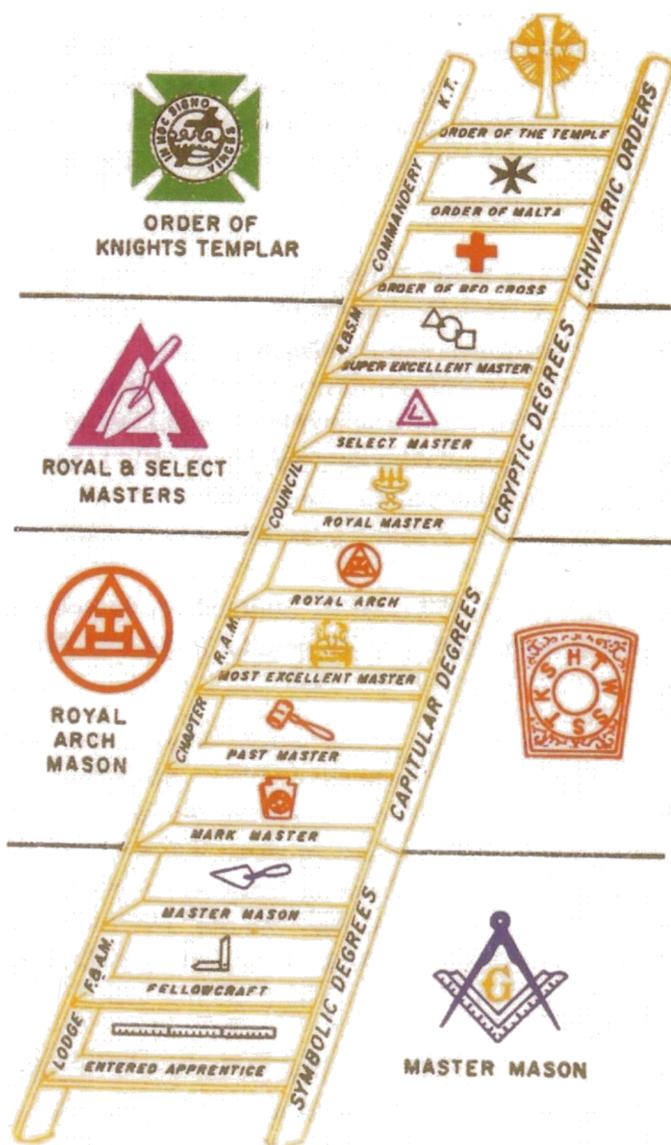
York Rite Masonry is the oldest and best known of all the Masonic Rites. It takes its name from the city of York in England, where the earliest known records of Masonry have existed, dating from about 926 AD. Masonry's first written history is centered around York. This was the seat of the Antient's Grand Lodge, which rivaled ... and eventually merged with the Moderns to form the United Grand Lodge of England and the basis of our current Masonic system.

When these two Grand Lodges united in 1813, a form and solemn landmark was adopted and placed in the Articles of Union to guide all Masons: "... pure ancient Freemasonry consists of but three degrees, that of Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft and Master Mason, including the supreme order of the Holy Royal Arch."

The noble heritage of York Rite Masonry is yours to claim—not for decoration, nor for rank but that you may more abundantly realize in your life, that Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God.

Will you join us?

"THERE SHALL YE FIND LIGHT"



Fork Rite of Freemasonry



Honorary
Degrees



Knight of the
Fork Cross
of Honour



Order of the
Purple Cross
of Fork



Red Cross of
Constantine



Holy Royal
Arch Knight
Templar



Order of
Knight
Masons



Masonic
Rosicrucian
Society



Commandery
The Chivalric
Degrees



Order of
the Red
Cross



Order of
Malta



Order of
the
Temple



(Honorary)
Knight
Crusader of
the Cross



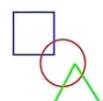
Council
The Cryptic
Degrees



Royal
Master



Select
Master



Super
Excellent
Master



(Honorary)
Price
Indistrious
Master



Chapter
The Capitular
Degrees



Mark
Master



Past
Master
(Virtual)



Most
Excellent
Master



Royal
Arch
Mason



(Honorary)
Order of
High
Priesthood



Blue Lodge
The Hiram
Degrees



1st
Entered Apprentice



2nd
Fellowcraft



3rd
Master Mason



(Honorary)
Past
Master