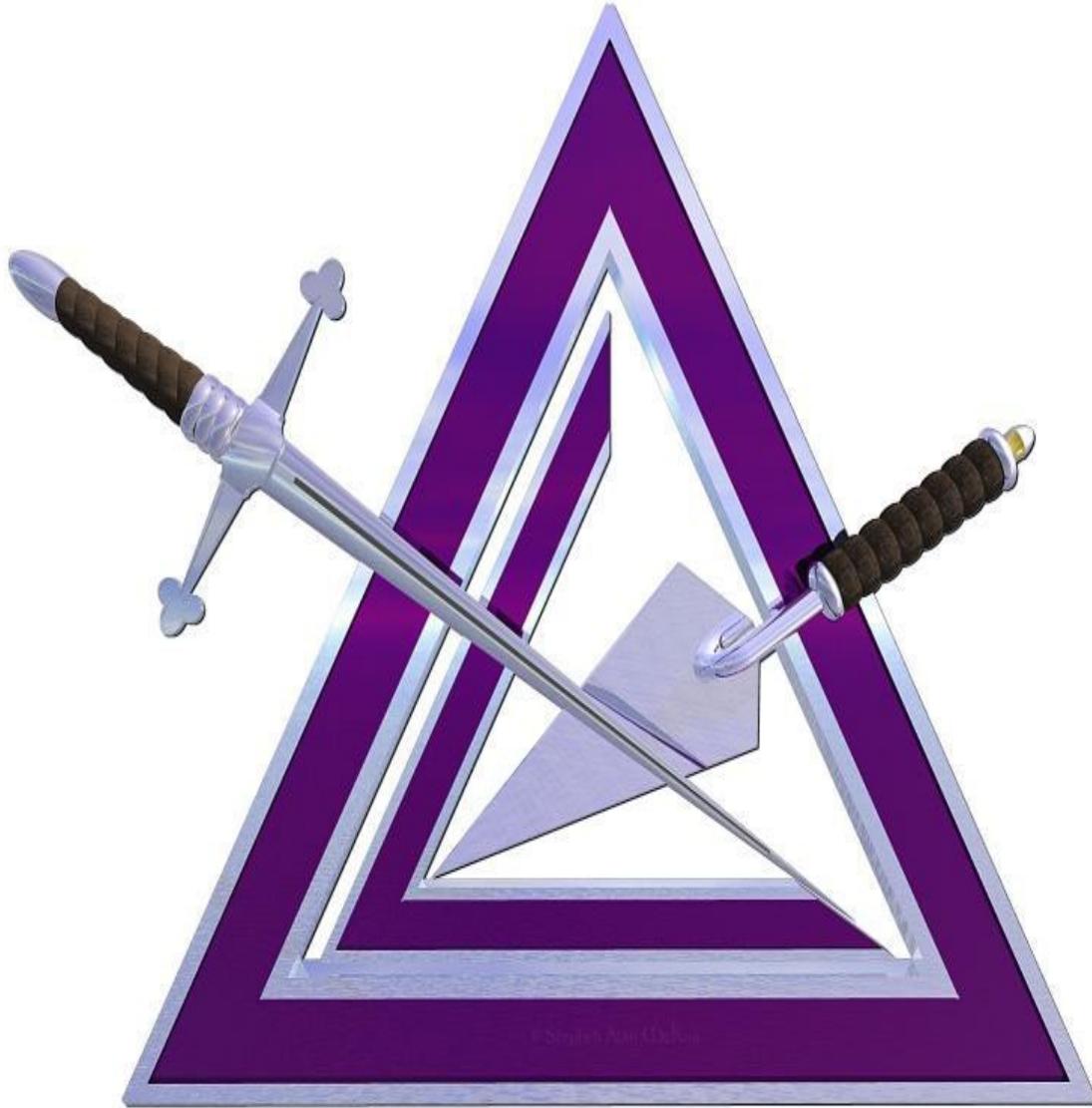


Grand Council of Kentucky
Royal and Select Masters



COUNCIL MASON MANUAL

Council Mason Manual

Each candidate is entitled to the best Masonic education that we can provide. This manual is provided to you so you can learn more about the degrees that have been conferred. The person(s) who signed your petition can also help answer any questions you may have.

OVERVIEW

The degrees of the Council are the Royal Master degree, the Select Master degree, and the Super Excellent Master degree. These three degrees must be conferred in this order, and the Royal and Select Master degrees must be conferred in the same day.

ROYAL MASTER DEGREE

The items on the table of Holy Vessels in the Southeast corner symbolize our debt to God and our hope that He will accept our sacrifices.

The beautiful piece of work that was presented to Grand Master Hiram Abiff was a symbol of a complete life offered to the Grand Architect of the Universe, Grand Master Hiram Abiff's answer was an indication that we are to await our spiritual reward in the next life.

Grand Master Hiram Abiff's soliloquy (talk) on death expands significantly on the themes of the Master Mason Degree, especially regarding portions of the Master Masons Lecture dealing with death and the afterlife.

Grand Master Hiram Abiff's tapping on the floor three times alluded to where the Master's Word was to be preserved for future generations to discover.

The cherubim surrounding you during the obligation symbolized the fact that you are under the protection of the Grand Architect of the Universe

as you bound yourself to Cryptic Masonry at this point in the degree. It also reminds us of the solemn nature of the degree and of the obligation.

The broken triangle, as used in this degree represents, among other things, “that which was lost.” It also serves as a constant reminder of the legend of Grand Master Hiram Abiff and the Legend of the Lost Word.

You observed the explanation of the broken triangle as the officers illustrated it for you. It is the means of recognition for Royal Masters.

Remember that in the Royal Arch Degree in the Chapter there were three to form the arch, and we use only two to form the “broken triangle” in the Council. This represents the death of Grand Master Hiram Abiff and the fact that the word they had agreed to use could never be communicated, that a substitute would have to be adopted.

The Royal Master Degree teaches us to constantly strive to use our time on earth wisely as none of us knows when he will be called by the Grand Architect of the Universe to the Celestial Council above. We must also keep our part of the covenant taught in the Great Book of the Law. The Temple being built here below represents this mortal life, which will be destroyed by death. Thus, we must constantly build our individual “second” Temple which we will inhabit in the spiritual house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, as was beautifully illustrated for you by Grand Master Hiram Abiff in this degree.

THE SELECT MASTER DEGREE

This degree historically occurs prior to the Third Degree of the Symbolic Lodge and deals with incidents that occurred at the building of the first temple. Here you will witness events closely connected with the Royal Arch Degree, which this degree will help you to better understand.

Here the story relates to the Masonic legend of the vault beneath King Solomon’s Temple. The events you witnessed refer to the arches of that

vault. During this degree, you saw the items King Solomon ordered to be deposited in the Ninth Arch, that the Work might be preserved for future times (and discovered in the Royal Arch degree in the Chapter).

The items deposited in the substitute ark you should recall from the Royal Arch Degree in Chapter. Here you learn more about those deposits, with verses from the Holy Scriptures serving as the lessons.

The legend of the vault is based on biblical history. This lays the groundwork for the Masonic legend by which workers excavating beneath Solomon's Temple discovered the vault and the items contained in the Ninth Arch. This degree explains the manner in which the treasures deposited under the Temple were subsequently found in the Substitute Ark by some of the workmen of Zerubbabel, at the building of the second temple.

It is important that you understand that what was found by the workmen in the Royal Arch Degree, was the "substitute" ark. This is also the ark into which the deposits were made in the Ninth Arch in this Degree. This ark is a substitute for the Ark of the Covenant, which was lost after the destruction of the Temple of Solomon. In the Masonic legend, what the workmen found inside this ark symbolizes the culmination of man's search for "that which was lost". The conclusion of this legend, i.e. the discovery of the lost word in the Royal Master Degree, would not have been possible were it not for the description of the manner of deposit in the select Master Degree.

SUPER EXCELLENT MASTER DEGREE

We also encourage you to receive the Super Excellent Master Degree. Although not a "degree of the crypt" since it does not refer to the Legend of the Crypt. This degree is not mandatory, but each Select Master should want to receive this dramatic and impressive degree, as it depicts circumstances and incidents during the siege of Jerusalem, and the final destruction of the first temple. In this way, it adds to our understanding and appreciation of the Royal and Select Degree. The Super Excellent Master degree is one of the most impressive in all of Freemasonry and each Council Mason should be aware of the importance of its lessons. It is portrayed in different parts of Kentucky at various times, and you will be provided information on when it

will be conferred through your local York Rite body. There is no fee charged for this degree.

THINGS YOU WANT TO KNOW

You should begin attending assemblies as soon as possible after you complete the degrees. As you begin attending, you will notice that the layout and organization of the Council differ from what you have seen in Lodge and Chapter. By referring to what you are familiar (i.e. the Blue Lodge and the Royal Arch Chapter), you can see the similarities and differences, how we are organized and how we work.

1) **The layout of the Council chamber and the principal officers:** You will notice that the overall layout of Council is similar to that of a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, with some important differences. The three principal officers in the Chapter sit in the East. In Council the three principal Officers also sit in the East and comprise the Illustrious Council. In the middle of the Illustrious Council in the East is the presiding officer – The Illustrious Master who, in the degree work, represents King Solomon. To his right is the Deputy Master (representing Hiram King of Tyre) and to the left of the Master is the Principal Conductor of the Work (representing Grand Master Hiram Abiff). These three officers correspond to the High Priest, King, and Scribe of a Royal Arch Chapter and to the Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, and Junior Warden in a Blue Lodge.

2) **Other officers:** While the Symbolic Lodge and Chapter have a Secretary, a Council of Royal and Select Masters has the same function but is called a Recorder who sits at a desk in the Southeast Corner of the Council chamber. In council, we also have a Treasurer whose desk is usually in the Northeast corner. As with the Blue Lodge, we also have a Chaplain.

In the West sits the Captain of the Guard who recites the traditions of Cryptic Masonry during the opening and closing ceremonies of the Council. In the South sits the Conductor of Council who attends at the altar during the opening and closing and also performs formal introductions at the altar. At the right of the Captain of the Guard is the Steward who carries instructions from the Captain of the Guard to the Sentinel and also attends to refreshments and other accommodations of the Companions.

Outside the door sits the Sentinel, whose duties correspond to those of the Tyler of a Blue Lodge and the Sentinel of a Royal Arch Chapter.

3) **Committees:** As with Blue Lodge and Chapter, each Council is staffed with various committees. These companions assist the officers in the operation of the Council in a number of ways. The Recorder can provide you with a list of the council's committees. The more committeemen a Council has working on the various tasks of the council, the better. The officers can't do all the work alone, and this is a good way for you to become active in Council. Regular attendance and participation in the council by a new member shows your interest.

4) **Opening and Closing:** By listening carefully to the officers recite their parts in the opening ritual of each Council assembly you can become familiar not only with the various officers and their duties, but also with many traditions, especially in the dialog between the Illustrious Master and the Captain of the Guard during the opening. Your ritual is a good tool to use in following these ceremonies, so as to learn who sits at stations and their various jobs within the Council.

THE ARCH AND THE GRAND COUNCIL

Once you become comfortable with the organization, layout and functions of the local Council, you can start learning about the Grand Council of Kentucky. Kentucky Lodges are organized into Districts; Chapters into Areas; and Councils are organized into Arches. As there are nine arches in the Select Master Degree, so the Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of the State of Kentucky is organized into nine Arches. You can obtain from the Recorder a list of all Councils in this arch.

Lodges and Chapters are inspected by "deputies" (District Deputy Grand Masters and District Deputy Grand High Priests), so Councils are inspected by Arch Deputies.

The Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of Kentucky holds an annual Grand Assembly during each year at a place determined by the Most Illustrious Grand Master. The Grand Council conducts business similar in

nature to that of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky and the Grand Chapter of Kentucky, Royal Arch Masons at their annual sessions.

CRYPTIC MASONS MEDICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

The philanthropy of the General Grand Council of Cryptic Masons International is the Cryptic Masons Medical Research Foundation (CMMRF), which Kentucky has adopted as our Council philanthropy. Researchers are funded by a Chair at Indiana University to research in the field of Vascular Biology. Dr. Keith March heads the Center, which targets Atherosclerosis, or heart diseases. Stem Cell research also is part of the studies, looking for possible cures for diabetes and other blood related diseases.

Hopefully the information provided in this manual will assist you in understanding how a Council functions. If our Councils are to grow and prosper in the future, it will be due to proper education of our new members. We hope this manual will boost your interest in York Rite Masonry.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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_____ Recorder

_____ Telephone #

APPENDIX A: BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE COUNCIL DEGREES

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Excerpts from an address by Roger M. Firestone, Grand Master of the Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of the District of Columbia, (March 20, 1999).

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