

Grand Council
Royal and Select Masters
Of
Florida



Mentor's Manual
Version April 23, 2008

FORWARD

The need of a mentor program for officers and members of Councils of Cryptic Masons of Florida has been evident for many years and thus this mentor plan was conceived to answer this problem. In the next few pages, we have attempted to include the requisites for building a fine, aggressive Council and for creating enthusiasm and pride of membership in Councils of Cryptic Masons.

The plan, therefore, must have as its main objective the promotion of an interest in Masonic knowledge. It must devise a means of creating a desire in the companion to learn more about Councils of Cryptic Masons and point out to him the sources from which he will be able to obtain more light. The mentor plan will endeavor to acquaint the new companion with some of the history of Councils of Cryptic Masons, its philosophies, and its objectives. It should also give him some insight into the literature of the fraternity wherein he may begin and continue his study of its teachings and doctrines.

Instruction under the mentor plan must be individualized and personalized if it is to be effective. In embracing this system, we are following the time-honored method of the fraternity that of imparting instruction from mouth to ear. In preparation of this program, we have consulted the programs and publications of the General Grand Council, our sister Grand Councils, Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons of Florida, and the Grand Lodge of Florida and have borrowed material freely from them when it seemed desirable to do so. Credit has not been given directly in each case because of our desire to limit the text as much as possible and to maintain continuity of thought for the benefit of those who will use the program. We would urge the use of this program. It is not perfect, nor is the system which it represents a perfect one. Time and experience alone will enable us to bring the jewel of Masonic education to its full beauty while ever remembering this program is a work in progress.

It should be noted that this is a work intended for the Cryptic Masons of Florida and is not intended to reflect on the efforts or policies of any other Grand Council, nor the General Grand Council. As a first lesson, the reader should be aware that like the Grand Lodge of Florida, the Grand Council is an independent organization, answerable only to itself. The General Grand Council is to the Grand Council like the organization of Grand Masters of North America is to the Grand Lodge, an advisory organization to which membership by the Grand Council is voluntary.

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THE MENTOR

Definition: The word "mentor" is defined in the dictionary as a friend entrusted with the education, trusted counselor, guide, tutor or coach.

In the 21st century, the mentor should seek to expand and intensify the instruction imparted by our ritual, adding to it many other points which will enlarge the new companion's understanding of Cryptic Masonry and its relationship to his life.

Objective: The mentor and the companion must understand that we are not endeavoring to produce a generation of Council scholars. Its motive is simply to indoctrinate each new companion in the ways of the Select Master and to create in him an understanding and arouse in his mind a feeling of pride in Cryptic Masonry. In so doing, it is hoped that he will learn that Cryptic Masonry is a way of life which each may embrace with great satisfaction.

The instruction given must seek to capture the interest of the candidate as he begins his Cryptic Masonry life. To accomplish this properly, each mason must have a mentor assigned to him immediately after his election to receive the degrees of Cryptic Masonry. It will be the mentor's duty to prepare the mind of the candidate for the reception of the great truths of Cryptic Masonry and an appreciation of its tenets and teachings

Appointment: The Illustrious Master of every Florida Council chartered by the Grand Council Royal & Select Masters of Florida is requested to appoint an education committee for his chapter and to designate certain well-qualified, dedicated, and enthusiastic companions as mentors. There should be a sufficient number of these companions so that no mentor would be required to serve more than five companions at anyone time. The assignment of candidates to the mentors may be done by either the Illustrious Master or the committee.

How the Mentor May Work: The mentor should visit the candidate immediately after his election and explain to him that he will be his mentor; a friend who will endeavor to help him in learning about Cryptic Masonry and one who will guide and counsel him.

The principal purpose of this first meeting is to introduce the candidate in a general way to Cryptic Masonry as a whole and to prepare him in mind and spirit. He must meet with the new companion frequently and give him that instruction which is so essentially necessary if he is to become a good Cryptic Mason. He should be encouraged to ask questions and have the answers, provided the answers do not involve those degrees which he has not received or other information to which he will become entitled later. In like manner, the mentor will be with the candidate through all the degrees of Cryptic Masonry. However, it should be understood that his duties are not complete when the candidate is exalted to a Select Master. Instruction must continue until the new companion is thoroughly at ease in the council, interested in its affairs and a regular attendant at its assemblies. Then, and only then, can we say that the task is completed which the mentor began at the time of the companion's election to receive the Cryptic Mason degrees.

PRE-INITIATION INSTRUCTION

The instruction given and the questions answered at this stage of the candidate's instruction to Cryptic Masonry can cover only the most general subjects. Pamphlets and brochures are available for some subjects on which questions will develop.

Cryptic Masonry Defined: The symbolic degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft and Master Mason as conferred in the United States are degrees of the York Rite. Therefore, every Master Mason raised in the state of Florida has received the first degrees of that Rite. It is perfectly natural that having begun their Masonic work in that Rite, they should want to continue it.

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF MASONIC DEGREES

The Council Degrees are a requirement of the York Rite in many Jurisdictions. It is good to know the order in which they would be portrayed if presented in chronological order.

- 1 The portion of the Royal Arch ante-dating the building of the Temple (Chapter).
- 2 The Entered Apprentice (Lodge).
- 3 The Fellow Craft (Lodge).
- 4 The Mark Master (Chapter).
- 5 The Royal Master. First Section (Council).
- 6 The Select Master (Council).
- 7 The Master Mason (Lodge).
- 8 The Royal Master. Second Section (Council).
- 9 The Past Master (Chapter).
- 10 The Most Excellent Master (Chapter).
- 11 The Super-Excellent Master (Council).
- 12 The Concluding Section of the Royal Arch (Chapter).
- 13 The Red Cross (Commandery).
- 14 The Order of Malta (Commandery).
- 15 The Order of the Temple (Commandery).

(It is questionable whether the last two should be reversed. Even the Grand Encampment had the order reversed for many years).

From this arrangement, it can readily be seen that a Mason who has not taken the Council degrees and does not understand their teachings, cannot possibly have a thorough understanding of even the Symbolic Lodge, let alone the Chapter and Commandery.

Councils of Cryptic Masons form the center body of the York Rite of Freemasonry. A Master Mason may join a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons and receive the four degrees of that organization. After which he may seek further knowledge in Freemasonry and join a Council of Cryptic Masons.

CRYPTIC RITE

No rite of Freemasonry has come into its own so much as the series of degrees known as the Cryptic Rite, also known as the Cryptic Masons. Its popularity is well deserved for there are no more beautiful or meaningful degrees in all Freemasonry than those conferred in the Council of Cryptic Masons.

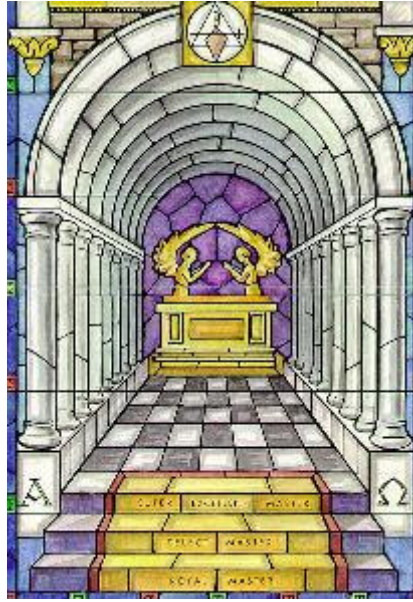
One reason for its popularity is that it completes a story, a Masonic allegory. Freemasonry is very philosophical and teaches its ideals by allegory or story. This philosophy is moralistic and religious; however, Freemasonry is not a religion, nor a substitute for one. A requirement for membership in Freemasonry is a professed belief in God and eternal life. It is mandatory that a man profess a personal faith in a Supreme Being prior to becoming a Freemason. Freemasonry never attempts to alter a brother's beliefs. Freemasonry offers no theology or plan of salvation. However, it does offer a moral plan to use in this world. This leaves the Mason to look to his religion for salvation into the next world.

Ancient Cryptic Masonry centers on and about the story of the preservation, loss and recovery of the Word. The Word represents man's search for life's purpose and the nature of GOD. Symbolic Freemasonry, as in the Lodge, teaches of the loss of the Word and hope for its recovery. Royal Arch Masonry, as in the Chapter, teaches its recovery. Cryptic Masonry, as in the Council, completes this story by teaching of the Word's initial preservation.

ORIGIN OF THE DEGREES

As in many of the Masonic degrees, the origins of the degrees of Cryptic Masonry are shrouded in mystery. Yet, they have attained a substantial growth and one out of every two Royal Arch Masons is a Cryptic Mason.

Nearly two hundred years ago the degrees of Royal Master and Select Master appeared. Traveling Masonic lecturers throughout the East were conferring them upon Masons, while engaging in instructing in Craft (Lodge) and Capitular (Chapter) degrees. Even one Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite included the degree of Select Master as one of its "detached" degrees. Nevertheless, these beautiful degrees were not to remain detached for any length of time. The state of Connecticut bore the first Grand Council in 1819. In Virginia and West Virginia, the degrees developed in the Chapter of Royal Arch Masons where they remain. In the 1870, a General Grand Council was formed for the United States of America. Today this Grand Council numbers most of the Grand Councils in the United States, as well as the western section of Canada.



THE VAULT AND THE MYSTERIES

Biblical students and archaeologists know of the vaults or crypts beneath King Solomon's Temple. Masonic Degrees were probably not actually conferred in these vaults. However, such a legend does persist throughout Freemasonry. The legends, conveyed in this system of degrees form a beautiful allegory or story. The Masonic author, Albert G. Mackey, writing of the vault, says, "The vault was, therefore, in the ancient mysteries, symbolic of the grave; for initiation was symbolic of death, where alone Divine Truth is to be found. Freemasons have adopted the same idea. They teach that death is but the beginning of Life; that if the first or evanescent Temple of our transitory life be on the surface, we must descend into the secret vault of death before we can find that sacred deposit of Truth, which is to adorn our second Temple with Eternal Life." This teaching is not unusual in Freemasonry since, as was stated previously, the requirements for membership include a professed belief in God and one's eternal life.

THE USE OF THE NAME CRYPTIC

The degrees of the York Rite are classified as Symbolic (Lodge of Master Masons), Capitular (Chapter of Royal Arch Masons), Cryptic (Council of Cryptic Masons), and Chivalric (Commander of Knights Templar). The Cryptic Rite or degrees derive its name from the setting of the degrees of Royal Master and Select Master in the underground crypt beneath King Solomon's Temple. In describing the degrees, the word cryptic means hidden. The last of the series of Cryptic degrees is not cryptic because it does not comply with the requirement of a vault scene. It might be regarded as one of the Cryptic Rite's detached degrees for it has no connection in either history or symbolism with those of Royal Master and Select Master, as shall be discussed later.

THE ROYAL MASTER DEGREE

This is the first degree of the Cryptic Rite as conferred in the United States of America. Candidates who receive the degree are impressed with its dignified ritual and relevant teachings. It contains one section, which is generally regarded as an outstanding display of symbolism and content of philosophy. The ritualistic presentations in the degree explain the articles contained in the Holy of Holies of King Solomon's Temple, including the Ark of the Covenant. A knowledge of which is essential to those who would fully understand the preceding degrees. The principal characters in the degree are Solomon and his royal assistant.

THE SELECT MASTER DEGREE

The degree of Select Master has not always been associated with that of Royal Master. Jeremy Cross, a traveling Masonic lecturer, author, and educator of the early 1800's, is given credit by most writers for having combined the two degrees into one rite. There is strong evidence to support the theory that the degree came from a similar degree in the Scottish Rite called Intimate Secretary or Grand Tiler of King Solomon. Regardless of its origin, the legend of this degree is old.

The scene of this degree is laid in the underground vault of King Solomon's Temple. The events, which characterize the degree, are stirring enough to make it one of intense interest. The ritualistic presentations contain the story to "complete the Circle of Perfection" in Ancient Craft Masonry.

THE SUPER EXCELLENT MASTER DEGREE

As we have stated, the degree of Super Excellent Master is not a degree of the Crypt, yet, it relates events that lead to the recovery of the lost Word. This degree beautifully tells of a period in history in which all Freemasons are interested, that period following the destruction of the first Temple. The essence of the degree is foretold in the presentation by the Principal Sojourner in the Royal Arch Degree when he makes reference "Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign and he reigned for eleven years in Jerusalem, and he did which was evil in the sight of the Lord his God.". The degree of Super Excellent Master is one of the best devised, most impressive, and beautiful degrees. It is most enlightening and relevant to one's daily life. In a display of exciting events, Biblical characters come to life exemplifying the historical drama of the Holy Bible. Here Nebuchadnezzar rules again, Zedekiah proves the results of his wicked life, Ezekiel and Jeremiah prophesy the promises of Almighty God.

CRYPTIC MASONS IN OTHER COUNTRIES

The Cryptic Rite is widespread, although governing bodies exist only in England, Scotland, Canada, and the United States. In England, a General Council controls the Cryptic Degrees. In Scotland, the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter has jurisdiction over the Cryptic degrees, the Royal Ark Mariner degree, the Knight of the East and West; bodies of the Cryptic Rite are attached to Chapters. It is interesting to note that while Scotland received the first three degrees of the last series from American sources, the degree of Thrice Illustrious Master, taken over recently in this country, was of Scottish origin.

THE WORK OF CRYPTIC MASONS

Freemasonry seeks to improve the community by improving the individual. Therefore, Councils of Cryptic Masons are found working with Lodges, Chapters, and Commanderies giving more opportunities to improve one's skills in leadership, public speaking, interpersonal relationships, and administration. This empowers Masons to become better leaders in their career, church, and community. Councils also work with these and other Masonic groups in community service projects to demonstrate Masonic teachings as a way of life.

The General Grand Council established the Cryptic Medical Research Foundation to give Cryptic Masons an opportunity to turn Masonic philosophy into a living practice. Currently the Foundation is working with medical researchers to find agents to prevent atherosclerosis or more commonly known as hardening of the arteries. This work places thousands of dollars annually into the needed research to stop our nation's largest killer, atherosclerosis and heart disease.

SIGNS, TOKENS AND WORDS

Signs, Tokens and Words: We attach considerable importance to the signs, tokens and words in Cryptic Masonry because they are an essential part of our modes of recognition. By the use of these, one may prove himself to be a Cryptic Mason and be able to recognize others as such. While these in themselves are insufficient proof of membership, they constitute very important links in the chain of evidence and those appointed to examine a visitor always ask for them.

The candidate should be reminded that each sign, token, and word has a symbolic meaning which should serve to enrich the mind and improve our lives as Cryptic Masons. (The Mentor should rehearse and explain all of the signs, tokens, and words of the degrees of Cryptic Masonry.)

The proper execution of all signs should be stressed and the new companion should be requested to cultivate the habit of such precise performance as would indicate his respect for the dignity of this part of our ceremonies. The proper execution of the signs will also give testimony to his fellow companions that he understands the signs and respects the ceremonies.

TITLES

Those Things Called Titles: Companions with a TITLE will come to your meetings and conventions. You may be charged with introducing or receiving them. What are you going to do?

If you approach the subject with a calm and even mind, you will not find it hard to apply the right title to the right man. Remember this, no officer, or Grand Officer, of any standing, is going to find fault if you happen to go astray in assigning him a title to which he is not entitled. It is possible, that in some other Masonic body, he might be doing the same thing you are. Masonic titles are so many, and of so many gradations, that only a Grand Secretary will ever know - and he is paid for doing just that.

In the first place, every member is a COMPANION.

Should the companion be elevated and become head of the Council (Illustrious Master) he is termed an Illustrious Companion. He may be no more Illustrious than you are, but his job is.

And should this same Companion become proficient and acquire enough recommendations from other companions who wish to see him elevated further, he may be elected Most Illustrious Grand Master of the state - and thereby acquire the title which goes with that station of Most Illustrious Companion.

And there we have it, Companion, Illustrious Companion, and Most Illustrious Companion.

There are exceptions which should be noted. In advancing in the line of state office, he acquires, during his passage through the stations of Deputy Grand Master or Grand Principal Conductor of the Work, the title of Right Illustrious Companion. This exception will apply to any elected officer who sits in the Grand East such as the Grand Treasurer, the Grand Secretary and those companions appointed as District Deputy Grand Masters.

Officer's of the Council

Each Constituent Council of Royal and Select Masters shall be composed of Royal and Select Masters in good standing, which has the following Officers:

Master (whose Title is Illustrious)
Deputy Master
Principal Conductor of the Work
Treasurer
Recorder
Chaplain
Captain of the Guard
Conductor of the Council
Steward
Sentinel

The Jewels of Office for Constituent Councils consist of an equilateral triangle, attached by a small ring to either a horizontal bar provided with a pin for fastening the Jewel to the Dress over the left breast, or a suitable cord or ribbon to place around the neck; with the triangle the distinguishing emblems of the particular Office are rigidly fastened, and are as follows:

The Square and Compasses joined with the Trowel, for the Illustrious Master.
The Level Joined with the Trowel, for the Deputy Master.
The Plumb joined with the Trowel, for the Principal Conductor of Work.
The Cross-Keys joined with the Trowel, for the Treasurer.
The Cross-Pens joined with the Trowel, for the Recorder.
The Open Book, for the Chaplain.
The Battle-Ax joined with the Trowel, for the Captain of the Guard.
The Scroll joined with the Trowel, for the Conductor of the Council.
The Cross-Swords joined with the Trowel, for the Steward.
The Sword joined with the Trowel, for the Sentinel.

The Jewels for the remaining active members may be an equilateral triangle, similar in size and form.

Duties of each officer:

Illustrious Master of the Council: Like the Worshipful Master of the Lodge, he is in charge of all that goes on in the Council during his term of office.

Deputy Master: He sits in the East to the right of the illustrious Master, his duties are more like the Senior Warden in the Lodge.

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Principal Conductor of Work: He is the Third Officer in this Council, and sits on the LEFT of the Illustrious Master. His duties are much like the Junior Warden of the Lodge.

Treasurer: His station is at the right of the Grand Council in the East and his duties are of course similar to the same officer in the Lodge.

Recorder: His station is at the left of the Grand Council in the East and his duties are of course similar to the same officer in the Lodge.

Chaplain: His station is in front of and to the right of the Deputy Master and his duties are of course similar to the same officer in the Lodge.

Captain of the Guard: His station is in the west, but his duties are more like the Marshall in the Lodge.

Conductor of Council: His station is in the south, but his duties correspond to those of the Senior Deacon in the Lodge.

Steward: His station is inside the outer door, and his duties correspond to those of the Junior Deacon in the Lodge.

Sentinel: His station is outside the outer door, his duties are of course similar to the Tyler in the Lodge.

COMMITTEES

There are several Committees that function in the Council. Depending on the size of the Council they may be separately designated by the Illustrious Master or in smaller Councils may be joined together in function, so that the same individuals provide the needed review and recommendations.

Charity: In every Council there is a need to keep our less fortunate Companions in mind. At each assembly a Charity Box shall be passed before the Council closes, and the funds collected shall be turned over to the Committee to disburse at its discretion. No restraint shall be placed upon the discretion of the Committee and, when contribution is made to an individual, he shall not be informed from whence the charity comes.

Finance Committee. A Finance Committee consisting of three members whose duty it shall be to examine and audit all accounts payable against the Council. The Deputy Master shall chair such Committee.

Visitation Committee. A Committee for the Visitation of the Sick, consisting of three members who shall endeavor to obtain information relative to all sick Companions,

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and to visit them and tender them such care and attention as their case may require; detailing, if necessary, such members of the Council as to them shall seem proper, to share with them this Fraternal Duty.

Entertainment Committee. An Entertainment Committee consisting of three members, to provide suitable programs for Social gatherings and to perform such other duties enjoined upon it by the Council from time to time for the entertainment of its members.

Vigilance Committee. A Vigilance Committee consisting of three members, to assure that the integrity of the Masonic Fraternity is maintained.

Delinquency Committee. A Delinquency Committee consisting of five members, of which the Illustrious Master and Recorder shall be two. It shall be the duty of this committee to inquire into, consider and report to the Council its recommendations in reference to members of the Council who are subject to suspension for the nonpayment of dues.

Property Committee. A Property Committee consisting of the Principal Conductor of the Work as Chairman, and two or more members, who shall be responsible for the costumes and property of the various degrees of the Council. They shall see that the costumes are properly cleaned, repaired and kept in good condition and purchase new costumes and property when authorized by the Council. It shall be the duty of this committee to see that the Secret Vault is properly set up for Degree Work and that all costumes and property needed are available and then, property stored when the Degree Work is completed.

Audit Committee. The Illustrious Master shall, at the time of the Annual Election of Officers, appoint an Auditing Committee, consisting of three members, whose duty it shall be to audit the books and accounts of the Treasurer and the Recorder at the close of the Cryptic year, and to report the conditions found at the time of Installation or at the following assembly. The Deputy Master shall by virtue of his office, chair this committee.