ANCIENT CRAFT MASONRY

AN INVITATION TO MASTER MASONS

THE YORK RITE

Here is a brief outline of the Degrees and Orders of York Rite Masonry, in the hope that this information will reach Master Masons, who otherwise would not receive it. In bringing them this under the heading "Ancient Craft Masonry", we are actuated by the fact that a number of these degrees were originally conferred under the jurisdiction of Grand Lodges, and **ALL** are related to the Symbolic Degrees.

The York Rite is four bodies, forming one whole. It is, arguably, the best way to complete your understanding of Ancient Craft Masonry.

LODGE of MASTER MASONS
(Known as SYMBOLIC DEGREES)

The ***ENTERED APPRENTICE*** is a bearer of burdens, symbolically taught to labour to subdue his passions and improve himself in Freemasonry.

The ***FELLOWCRAFT*** is a skilled workman, carefully instructed in the principles of architecture, the five human senses, the seven liberal arts and sciences and the importance of the Deity.

The ***MASTER MASON*** is an overseer of the work and is taught many moral lessons and prepared for the life to come, **BUT**. . . the temple of life is not yet complete, and those faithful Craftsmen who have labored so long are deprived, by the wickedness of others, of that for which they have wrought so faithfully – the **WORD**, which would entitle them to their due, their WAGES.

Because the symbolism used in the Symbolic Degrees are often difficult to comprehend, the York Rite Degrees exist to explain and clarify the knowledge imparted to us in symbolic form and to supply that which was lost but later found.

CHAPTER of ROYAL ARCH MASONS
(Known as CAPITULAR DEGREES)

MARK MASTER – The work on the Temple continues. Consider this as developing the Fellowcraft Degree. There, we are taught that the knowledge we received can be honour and the profit of others. Here, a beautiful lesson is exemplified, inculcating the value of fellowship and acceptance of others. We see the truth that although we are often misunderstood, underrated and criticized, there is ONE who will make *the rejected stone the head of the corner*.

MOST EXCELLENT MASTER – This is a significant Degree in Ancient Craft Masonry. King Solomon's Temple, which was begun so auspiciously and halted so dramatically in the Third Degree, is completed amid much rejoicing and great splendor. The labourers of the Craft are given the blessing of the Lord, who descended as fire from heaven. King Solomon, in his gratitude, received and acknowledged them as Most Excellent Masters. Proficient in their work, they are empowered to travel and receive Master's Wages, charged with the responsibility of sharing their Masonic Light and Knowledge with those less informed.

THE HOLY ROYAL ARCH – This degree we are told, was removed from the Symbolic Degrees, of which it was once a part, to reserve it for the more earnest seeker of Light in Masonry. Originally only Past Masters of Lodges were admitted to these supreme secrets which meant that very few received them. Now it is the keystone of our rites. Here, we find the completion of the Master Mason Degree and the recovery of the Word. After the death of King Solomon, his magnificent Temple was destroyed and the Israelites carried away as captives to Babylon, where they lived for another 70 years.

When liberated by King Cyrus of Persia, many of them returned to Jerusalem and began rebuilding the Temple. While this work was going on and the remains of the first Temple were being cleared away, many interesting and valuable discoveries were made, chief of which was the *Lost Word of the Master*. Throughout the degree, we learn the benefits of humbleness, working to make ourselves better men and companions to our brothers by the fervency and zeal of our endeavours:

"…for then, and only then can you feel that friendship, that union, that zeal and that purity of heart".

COUNCIL of ROYAL and SELECT MASTERS
(Known as CRYPTIC DEGREES)

ROYAL MASTER – This Degree takes us backward in time to a day prior to the death of the builder, who is again the central character. He imparts sublime teachings of a useful labour on earth to the candidate and gives him instruction as to the preservation of our valuable secrets. This is one of the most beautiful Degrees in all Masonry. Its lessons are so impressive that they are seldom forgotten. It is especially illustrative of the Master Mason and Holy Royal Arch Degrees.

SELECT MASTER – Historically, this Degree occurs also prior to the Master Mason Degree, and deals with incidents that occurred at the building of the first Temple. It is closely connected with the Royal Arch Degree and affords the explanation needed for its perfect understanding. It is highly dramatic.

SUPER EXCELLENT MASTER – This Degree refers to circumstances and incidents during the siege of Jerusalem and the final destruction of the Temple. The work is dramatic and most impressive. This completes the impressive lessons of our Circle of Perfection in Ancient Craft Masonry.

PRECEPTORY of KNIGHTS TEMPLAR
(Known as the Chivalric Orders)

ORDER OF RED CROSS – Here again we revert to the period of the Royal Arch Degree when the Jews were returning from Babylon to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple. One of their number prevails upon King Darius to restore the Holy Vessels to the new Temple. The Babylonian armies had carried them away when the first Temple was destroyed. In presenting his plea before the king, the companion gives a powerful testimony to the almighty force of Truth and Honour.

ORDER of MALTA and of ST-JOHN -- Shifting to the time of the Crusades, admission to these Orders is sought so that a safe Pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulcher might be undertaken. This is a sublime and sacred Order, which culminates in the enrollment of the suppliant as a Knight of Malta.

ORDER OF THE TEMPLE – No Degree or Order in Masonry is more solemn, impressive or soul-searching than the Order of the Temple. It is a fitting climax to the labours of the humble penitent, who has faithfully performed the symbolic seven years of preparation for this consummation of his endeavors. He is knighted as a *Christian* warrior.

Knights Templar were so named because of their close association with the site of the temple during years they occupied Jerusalem. The Ancient Order of the Temple has been dispersed and its warlike spirit has passed away. There remains, however, a spirit of refined and moral Chivalry which prompts its members to be ever ready to defend the weak, the innocent, the helpless and the oppressed.

The Order of the Temple is often called the most beautiful of all the Orders and Degrees in Masonry. No Mason, who is a believer in the Chritsian religion should be satisfied until he has received this – the capstone of the York Rite.

Honours available to York Rite Masons in New Brunswick

(The Order of High Priesthood and the Order of the Silver Trowel are referred to as "Chair Degrees", open to only those who have presided over Chapters or Councils)

Royal Ark Mariners – A degree for Royal and Select Masters linking Freemasonry to Noah's ultimate saving of humanity in the Great Flood.

Order of the High Priesthood – For those who have been elected to preside over a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons

Order of the Silver Trowel – For those who have been elected to preside over a Council of Royal and Select Masters

Red Cross of Constantine – By invitation only to those York Rite Masons who have served (and continue to serve) Masonry (and the York Rite community in particular) with distinction, dedication and honour.

York Rite College - By invitation only to those York Rite Masons who have served Masonry and the York Rite with dedication. Their goal is to offer service, help and leadership to the other bodies of York Rite Masonry and in the Lodges.

Knights of the York Cross of Honour - By invitation only to those York Rite Masons who have presided and served over all of the York Rite Bodies of Chapter, Council and Preceptory as well as having been the Worshipful Master of a Lodge. These are men who are proven servants of the Masonic Fraternity. Their inspiration is their Past, their duty is in the present and their Hope is in the Future.

How to Proceed

The continuation of Masonic Light as shown in the York Rite, must be sought in the same manner as the first three degrees. You may present your petition to your Royal Arch Chapter at any time following your Master Mason Degree. When elected, you will be contacted and the journey will continue.

Your Degrees and Orders will be conferred at regular meetings or at special gatherings and field days with sister groups. (In some cases, the work is conferred on groups of candidates in close succession. This plan is starting to grow in popularity, and is preferred by some candidates who are frequently out of town, or who wish to complete their Degrees and Orders of Masonry more quickly**.)**

Do not wait to be invited or solicited

Make your move NOW!

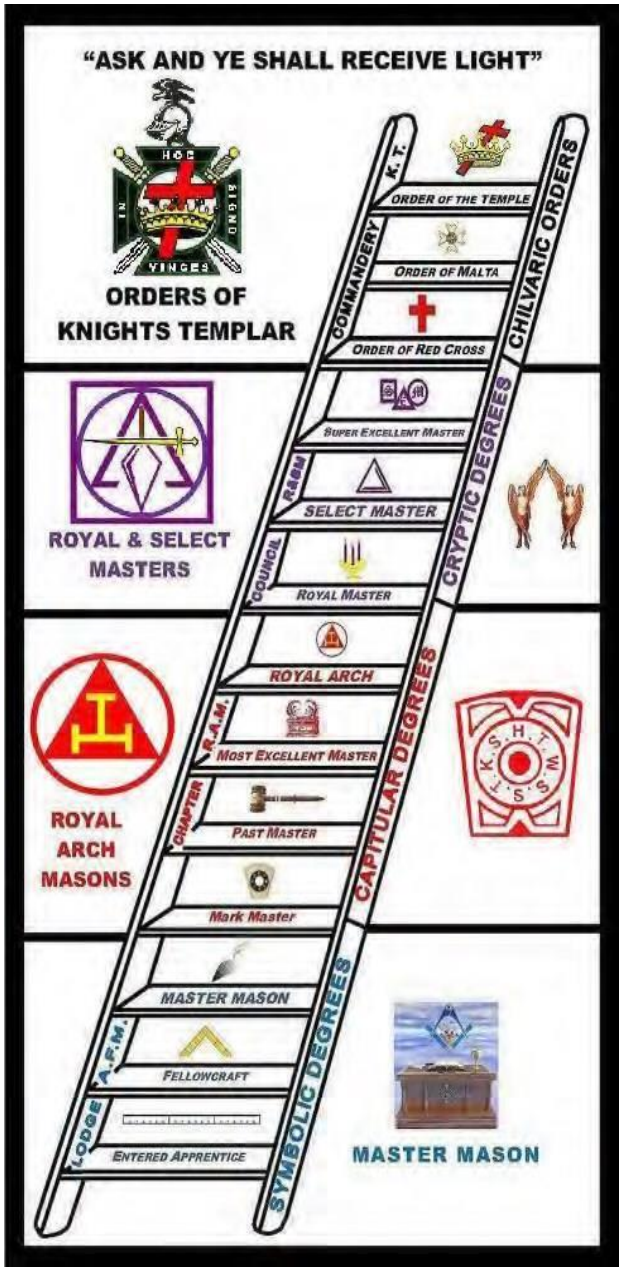
Although solicitation for membership is not prohibited in York Rite Masonry, do not just sit and wait to be asked to join. If this looks like something you want, or would be interested in, start asking questions. See who is a York Rite Mason in your Lodge, come out to a fellowship time which usually proceeds our meetings. Meet our members…you would be surprised at who you already know!

Check out our *York Rite Masons of New Brunswick* Website at: www.yorkritenb.ca to find the details of the Chapter closest to you. Contact them and get climbing!

For any further information, feel free to contact:

The Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of New Brunswick

Eric J. Johnson, Grand Scribe Ezra
21 Beverley Hills Drive
Grand Bay – Westfield, New Brunswick
E5K 1X5
Email: eric.johnson@nbed.nb.ca or johnsons@rogers.com
Phone: 1-506-639-1198



The York Rite

The completion of Ancient Craft Masonry in New Brunswick