

Historical Notes concerning the York Grand Lodge

by Bro C J Scott, P.M.M.

(1911)

The title of this ancient institution was, prior to the year 1725, " The Ancient and Honourable Society and Fraternity of Freemasons meeting since time immemorial in the City of York." In 1725 it assumed the tide, " The Grand Lodge of All England meeting in the City of York."

The Documents and Manuscript Constitutions. Minute Books and Regalia are in the custody of the York Lodge, No. 236, at York.

Manuscript Constitutions.

No. 5. "York," No. 1, 17th century, in possession of " York," 236.

No. 10. " York," No. 3, A.D. 1630, now missing.

No. 21. " York." No. 5, 17th century, in possession of " York." 236.

No. 22. " York," No. 6, 17th century, do. do.

No. 25. " York," No. 4, A.D. 1693 do. do.

No. 27. " York," No. 2, A.D. 1704 do. do.

Parchment Scroll containing Minutes, commencing March 7th, 1705, were at York in 1779, now missing.

Parchment Scroll, No. 7, Minutes extant since 1712, in possession of "York." 236.

Deputations

1. Scarborough, 1705.

Manuscript Constitution No. 28, " Scarborough," in possession of the Grand Lodge of Canada.

2. Bradford, 1713.

Manuscript Constitution No. 20, " Hope," in possession of the Lodge of Hope. 302, Bradford.

After the establishment of the Grand Lodge of England, at London, in 1717, the Ancient and Honourable. Society and Fraternity of Freemasons assumed the tide of " The Grand Lodge of All England meeting since time immemorial in the City of York."

In a manuscript work in the Leeds Library, "A Collection of Coats of Arms and Descents of the several Families of the West Riding," from manuscript of John Hopkinson, corrected by T. Wilson,

of Leeds, is the following entry under the name Sir Wm. Milner:

"On St. John's the Baptist Day, 1728, at York. he was elected Grand Master of the Freemasons in England, being the 798th successor from Edwin the Great."

The Master Masons Degree was introduced at York about 1728.

The Grand Lodge of York was recognised and in friendly relations with the Grand Lodge at London - vide " Book of Constitution." 1738.

"All the foreign Lodges (those to which Deputations have been granted by the London Grand Lodge) are under the patronage of the Grand Master of England."

"But the Old Lodge of York City. and the Lodges of Scotland, Ireland. France, Italy, etc., affecting independency, are under their own Grand Masters. though they have the same Constitutions, Charges, Regulations, etc., for their substance, with their Brethren of England ('Book of Constitution,' 1738, in possession of the Lodge of Hope, 302).

The Minutes from about 1740 to 1760 are missing. Regular Minutes commence again March 17th, 1761.

Grand Master	Bro. Francis Drake. F.R.S.
Deputy Grand Master ...	Bro. George Reynoldson.
Grand Wardens ...	George Coates, Thomas Mason.

The following Fees were charged by the York Grand Lodge:

For conferring the Three Degrees £2 16s 0d

Quarterage...	£ 0 6s 6d
Joining Members ...	£0 10s 6d
Certificate	£0 6s 0d

The following are the Subordinate Lodges chartered by the Grand Lodge of All England since 1761 :

- 1 . " French Lodge," Punch Bowl, York ... June 10th, 1762.
2. Scarborough Aug. 19th, 1762.
3. " Royal Oak Ripon July 1st, 1769.
4. " Crown " Knaresborough Oct. 30th, 1760.
5. "Duke of Devonshire," Macclesfield Sept. 24th, 1770.
6. Hovingham May 29th, 1773.
7. Snainton Dec. 14th, 1778.
9. " Druical Lodge" Rotherham Dec. 22nd, 1778,
10. "Fortitude" Hollingwood Nov. 27th, 1790.

Deputation for a "Grand Lodge":

8. " Grand Lodge of All England South of the River Trent," at London Mar. 29th, 1779.

No. 1. Lodge of Perfect Observance, London Aug. 9th, 1779.

No. 2. Lodge of Perseverance and Triumph, London ... Nov. 15th, 1779,

The York Grand Lodge fell in decay about 1793, the last Grand Secretary was Bro. W. Blanchard, proprietor of the " York Chronicle!"

The first mention of the Royal Arch Lodge at York is found in an entry, February 7th, 1762. This Lodge afterwards developed into the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of All England, at York, in 1768.

The following are the Royal Arch Chapters under the York Grand Chapter

1. Ripon Feb. 7th, 1770.
2. " Crown," Knaresborough ... April 1770.
3. Inniskilling Regiment of Dragoons ... Oct. 1770.
- 4 Druical Chapter, Rotherham ... Feb. 25th, 1780.

The Degrees governed by the Grand Lodge of All England, at York, were five in number:

1. Entered Apprentice.
2. Fellow Craft and Mark.
3. Master Mason.
4. Royal Arch.
5. Knights Templar.

The Subordinate Encampments warranted by Grand Lodge of All England were:

- K.T. Encampment, Rotherham ... July 6th, 1780.
Do. Manchester Oct.10th, 1786.

Particulars supplied by the late Bro. T. B. Whytehead of York, (1892)

Rules of the Grand Lodge of York A.D. 1725

Originally written on parchment, now in the custody of the York Lodge, No. 236 ; transcribed by Hughan, -Masonic Sketches and Reprints."

"ARTICLES agreed to be kept and observed by the Ancient Society of Freemasons in the City of York, and to be subscribed by every Member thereof at their admittance into the said Society."

1st-That every first Wednesday in the month a Lodge shall be held at the house of a Brother, according as their turn shall fall out.

2nd-All subscribers to these Articles not appearing at the Monthly Lodge shall forfeit sixpence each time.

3rd.-If any Brother appear at the Lodge, who is not a subscriber to these Articles, he shall pay over and above his club (i.e. his subscription) the sum of one shilling.

4th.-The Bowl shall he filled at the Monthly Lodge with Punch once, Ale. Bread and Cheese. and Tobacco in common, but if any more shall be called for by any Brother, either for eating or drinking. that Brother shall pay for it himself, besides his club.

5th - The Master or Deputy shall be obliged to call for a Bill exactly at ten o'clock, if they meet in the evening, and discharge it.

6th.-None to be admitted to the making of a Brother but such as have subscribed to these Articles.

7th.-Timely notice shall be given to all subscribers when a Brother or Brothers are to be made.

8th.-Any Brother or Brothers presuming to call a Lodge with a design to make a Mason or Masons, without the Master or Deputy, or one of them deputed, for every such offence shall forfeit the sum of Five Pounds.

9th.-Any Brother that shall interrupt the examination of a Brother shall forfeit one shilling.

10th.-Clerk's salary for keeping the Books and accounts shall be one shilling, to be paid him by each member at his admission, and at each of the two Grand days he shall receive such gratuity as the Company (i.e. those present) shall think proper.

11th.-A Steward to be chosen for keeping the Stock at Grand Lodge, at Christmas, and the accounts to be passed 3 days after each Lodge.

12th.-If any dispute arise the Master shall silence them by a knock of his gavel, any Brother that shall presume to disobey shall immediately be obliged to leave the Company or forfeit Five shillings.

13th.-An hour shall be set apart to talk Masonry.

14th.- No person shall be admitted into the Lodge but after having been strictly examined.

15th.- No persons shall be admitted as Brothers of this Society that shall keep a Public House.

16th.- That these Articles shall at Lodge be laid upon the table, to be perused by the Members, and also when any New Brother be made, the Clerk shall publicly read them.

17th.- Every New Brother shall pay the Wait(er)s as their salary the sum of two shillings, the money to be lodged in the Steward's Hands, and paid them at each of the Grand Days.

18th.-The Bidder of the Society shall receive of each New Brother at his admission the sum of one shilling as his Salary.

19th.- No Money shall be expended out of the Stock after the hour of ten, as in the fifth Article.

***Extract from the Report of the Research
Committee appointed by the Lodge of Hope, in in
1802, to examine the Documnets and Records in
possession of the Lodge.***

REGARDING THE MARK LODGE.

THE Records of the Old Mark Lodge attached to the Lodge of Hope, 379. later 302, carry us back to 1852. Previous records have not been recovered amongst the Documents of the Lodge, but there are sufficient proofs that the Mark Lodge has been in existence at the beginning of this century (19th), or earlier.

In the Mark Register, commenced in 1852, a number of Brethren have been carried forward from a previous Register (now missing). Among the names is Bro. R. M. Scholefield, from whom we know that he was a Mark Mason previous to 1813.

A Record of the Hope Lodge informs us that Bro. R. M. Scholefield was deputed by the Lodge to attend the formation of the United Grand Lodge Of England, in 1813, in order to ascertain the position of the Hope Mark Lodge under the new Regulations.

According to the arrangements then made, the Lodge of Hope was entitled to practice the Mark Degree under the old Constitution derived from the Grand Lodge of York, which recognised the Mark Degree, and which was confirmed by the Union.

Ever since the Lodge of Hope practised the Mark Degree under its Banner.

Remarks on the Old Ritual of the Old York Mark Lodge

The Ritual of the Old York Mark Lodge, previous to the enrolment of the Lodge under the Banner of Grand Mark Lodge of England, was different from the present Ritual.

The position of the Mark Degree was then between the Second and Third Degrees. According to the old Minutes the proceedings were as follows:

The Lodge was opened in the First and afterwards in the Second Degree by the Worshipful Master or a Past Master and the Craft officers, the Lodge was then proclaimed open in the Mark Degree, and the Mark Officers took their respective stations.

The Mark Lodge was presided over by the King, representing King Nebuchadnezzar, his principal officers were:

Tatmai, Governor of this side of the River.

Shetham Bornai, Governor of the other side of the River. A bridge over which the Candidate had to pass represented the River.

The other officers were: Two Sojourners. Scribe. Guard within and without.

Every Past Master of a Craft Lodge, who was a member of the Mark Lodge, was also considered a Past Master in the Mark Lodge, and qualified to be elected as King or to the offices of Tatmai or Shetham Bornai.

The first part of the ceremony of promotion perpetuated the return of the tribe of Judah from Babylonian captivity, " to receive the promise of a Mark Mason of rebuilding the Temple and the Holy City"..

This portion of the ceremony was given by the King and his Governors.

The second part of the ceremony, though slightly different, is practically the same -in substance as our present ceremony.

This part was given by a Past Master.

The Brethren wore ordinary Craft clothing, the only distinguishing badge was a jewel representing the old Jewish half-shekel, worn on a white ribbon " attached to the fifth buttonhole of the garment called a Waistcoat."

After the Mark business was concluded the Mark Lodge was proclaimed closed, and the Craft officers resumed their stations.

The Lodge was then closed in the Second and afterwards in the First Degree.

The late Bro. T. B. Whytehead, of York, when he was shown the old Ritual, expressed the opinion that it was practically the same as the Ritual in use now in the Red Cross Degree.

This is borne out to some extent by the following communication received from the Chancellor of the Priory of West Yorkshire, dated. Yeadon, Leeds, 15th January, 1912:

Dear Bro. Schott.

Many thanks for your very interesting information about the Teutonic Knights. I have wanted this for some time past.

I, like you, think that the White Cross Knights is another title for the Knights of Malta, but the Red Cross can easily mean half-a-dozen different Orders. It applied to the Red Cross of Constantine, the Knights of the East, Knights of the Sword, Knights of the East and West, and K.T., and Sir Charles Cameron, Dep. Grand Master of K.T, in Ireland, says that the degree of ' Knights of the Red Cross and Mark Master' was given in Ireland under the sanction of the Early Grand Encampment. I give you an extract from his writings, it may be information also for your Mark paper. He says (1900): ' I have seen a Certificate issued from the Royal Master and Captain General of the Grand Chapter of Knights of the Red Cross and Mark Masters of Encampment No. 48, held under the sanction of the Early Grand Encampment of Ireland. It has a plain red seal in wax, and a stamped black and white seal containing a Maltese Cross and the words 'Red Cross Lodge. No. 48.' It is signed by the Royal Master, the Captain General, the Lieutenant, and the Grand Scribe, and is dated 1807.' ' He says also, 'A Certificate issued from the High Priest of the Chapter of Knights of the Red Cross and Noachidas, held under sanction of Lodge No. 271, is dated in Limerick. 27th February. 1790. and of the Order of Red Cross, 2326.' Noachite, or. Prussian Knight, is the Twenty-first degree in the A. and A. Scottish Rite."

'Freemasons' Quarterly Review,' September, 1837, says, 'June 20th. An Investiture of Knights of the Sword and Red Cross was held in the Chapter Rooms (Dublin), on which occasion Bro. Philips, P.M. No. 2, Bro. Quinton, P.M. No. 4, and Bro. Nixon, No. 50, were knighted and invested with the Badges and Jewels of this honourable degree, which is a continuation of the Order of the Sword, first instituted A.D. 1515, by Gustay Wasa, and revived as a Military distinction in the year 1748, by Frederic the Great."

Letter from the G.S. of Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of England, etc.

I have read very carefully the paper of Bro. C. J. Schott on the Traditions of the Old York T.I. Bradford, and venture to think it is a most interesting addition to what has already been written and

published about the Mark Degree.

I must, however, take exception to the author's calling the establishment of the Ancients Grand Lodge, in London. a schism.

The late Bro. Henry Sadler, Librarian of the United Grand Lodge of England, has proved most satisfactorily, in his " Masonic Facts and Fictions." that the founders of the 1751 Grand Lodge were principally composed of Irish Masons, who accused the 1717 Grand Lodge of having departed from the Old Land-Marks of the Craft, and of having introduced many innovations, for which charge there was most undoubtedly good foundation, and it was on this ground that the Ancients Grand Lodge of 1751, called the Grand Lodge of 1717 " Modern Masons."

There is a statement on page 17 that Bro. Scholefield was appointed by the Lodge to represent it at the Union in 1813, and to attend the Lodge of Reconciliation, and that he reported that by the authority of the Grand Master, and the arrangements then come to, the Lodge of Hope was entitled to continue to confer the Mark under the authority of the Old York Manuscript Constitution.

If this statement is not merely tradition, but can be proved beyond question, it will form a new and important standpoint, but it seems to set at nought the Articles of the Union, which declared " that pure and Ancient Masonry consists of three degrees, and no more," etc.

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