

The Royal Secret in America before 1801

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May 31, 1801, is the most significant date in the history of high degree Masonry in the United States. On that day the Mother Supreme Council of the World was opened by John Mitchell and Frederick Dalcho in Charleston, South Carolina, and in the course of the year “the whole number of Grand Inspectors General was compleated agreeably to the Grand Constitutions.”¹ By this act the Order of the Royal Secret of twenty-five degrees (often called the Rite of Perfection) was transformed into the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of thirty-three degrees.²

Before the creation of the Mother Supreme Council, the high degrees were spread through an inconsistent system of Inspectors, each of whom could appoint an unrestricted number of Inspectors without limit to authority. Records are scarce, but two Inspectors seem to have been working in the Western hemisphere before 1761: “Lamolere de Feuillas, made a Deputy prior to 1750 in France, and Bertrand Berthomieu, made a Deputy by Feuillas in 1753 in the West Indies.”³ It is not known if Feuillas or Berthomieu appointed further Inspectors.

In 1761 Etienne Morin received a patent at Paris that authorized him to propagate the Rite throughout the world. He arrived in Jamaica in 1762 or 1763 and soon appointed six Inspectors General, including Henry Andrew Francken as a Deputy Inspector General.⁴ Francken in turn established a Lodge of Perfection in Albany, New York, in 1767 and created six other Deputy Inspectors General. He also prepared at least three books with the rituals translated into English.⁵ Eventually fifty-two Inspectors descended from Francken, and at least seventy-five Inspectors were appointed in American before 1801.⁶

The Inspectors and Deputies did more than reproduce themselves; they conferred the Ineffable (4°–14°) and Sublime (15° and above) Degrees upon Master Masons and occasionally established bodies. Again records are scarce, but at least the following eight bodies were established before 1801:

1. 1764 - *Loge de Parfaits d'Écosse*, New Orleans, Louisiana;⁷
2. 1767 - The Ineffable Lodge of Perfection, Albany, New York;
3. 1781 - Lodge of Perfection, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania;
4. 1783 - Lodge of Perfection, Charleston, South Carolina;

¹ Supreme Council of the U.S.A., *Circular throughout the two Hemispheres. Universi Terrarum Orbis Architectonis Gloria ab Ingentis. Deus Meumque Jus. Ordo ab Chao* (Charleston, S.C.: Thomas B. Bowen, 1802).

² The twenty-five degree system that evolved into the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite is properly known as the “Order of the Royal Secret,” though it has been misidentified for more than a century as the “Rite of Perfection.” In a private communication with the author, Alain Bernheim points out that the first use of the correct name by twentieth-century authors appears to be by W. W. Covey-Crump and S. H. Perry in their unpublished paper, “Order of the Royal Secret: Its History and Mystery,” referenced in the “April 1954 Minutes of the History Committee, Supreme Council, 33°, A.A.S.R., N.M.J.,” p. 31. Bernheim went on to confirm the correct name of the Order by verifying the transcription of a patent from Etienne Morin to Antoine Charles Menessier de Boissy in the name of the “Sublime Commanders of the Order of the Royal Secret.” Arturo de Hoyos points out that the *Circular throughout the two Hemispheres* refers to Frederick the Great as “Grand Commander of the order of Prince of the Royal Secret.”

³ Henry W. Coil et al., *Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia* (New York: Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Co., 1961), s.v. “Morin, Stephen.”

⁴ Harold van Buren Voorhis, *The Story of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry* (New York: Press of Henry Emerson, 1965), p. 15; Alain Bernheim, “Questions About Albany,” *Heredom*, vol. 4 (1995), p. 142.

⁵ The three known copies of the Francken Manuscript are owned by the Supreme Council, 33°, N.M.J., U.S.A., United Grand Lodge of England, and Supreme Council, 33°, for England and Wales.

⁶ Voorhis, pp. 56, 57.

⁷ *Loge de Parfaits d'Écosse* seems to have been part of the Bordeaux system from which emerged Etienne Morin and the Order of the Royal Secret. From the scanty records available, we cannot know for certain what degrees were worked during its brief existence in New Orleans, but almost surely it would have been a subset of those in a Lodge of Perfection. Alain Bernheim, private communication to the author.

5. 1788 - Grand Council, Princes of Jerusalem, Charleston, South Carolina;
 6. 1791 - King Solomon's Lodge of Perfection, Holmes' Hole (now Tisbury), island of Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts;
 7. 1792 - Lodge of Perfection, Baltimore, Maryland;
 8. 1797 - Sublime Grand Council, Princes of the Royal Secret, Charleston, South Carolina.⁸
- These basic facts of high degree activity before the creation of the Supreme Council are well known and have been repeated in many places. What they fail to do is to inform us how the high degrees appealed to American Masons, how the Inspectors spread the degrees, and how the bodies operated. The answers to these questions help us understand the acceptance of the Mother Supreme Council.

The Appeal of the High Degrees to American Masons

The Craft or Blue Degrees were being conferred by 1730 in America, and twenty-three years later in December 1753 Fredericksburg Lodge in Virginia recorded the first conferral anywhere of the Royal Arch Degree. American Master Masons soon realized that they had not received the entire account of the Master's Word and that the Royal Arch was required to complete the story. Royal Arch Masonry became popular as more Masons sought to complete their Masonic knowledge. The steady spread of the Royal Arch was aided by the growing dominance in America of Antient lodges that conferred the degree on the authority of their Craft warrants. At least five Chapters independent of lodges were created by 1794, the Grand Chapter of Pennsylvania was instituted in 1795, and the General Grand Chapter of New England States was formed in 1796. The first Knight Templar conferral was in 1769, and there is sporadic evidence of the order until 1796 when the first Encampment (now Commandery) was formed in Connecticut.⁹ The ten degrees and orders of what has come to be known as the American "York Rite" were summarized and given wide publicity in Thomas Smith Webb's *Freemason's Monitor; or, Illustrations of Masonry* (1797).

American Masons enthusiastically pursued further light in Masonry, but because the Order of the Royal Secret was of French origin and had no tradition in English lodges, these high degrees were little known. These ceremonies must have seemed like alluring rumors only available from remote non-English lodges or from traveling Masonic lecturers. The fragmentary knowledge of Sublime Masonry was aided by occasional tantalizing mentions in Masonic books.

The first American book on Masonry was Benjamin Franklin's 1734 reprint of Anderson's *Constitutions of the Free-Masons*. A total of 626 volumes dealing with Freemasonry were published

⁸ For New Orleans, see Kent Walgren, "An Historical Sketch of Pre-1851 Louisiana Scottish Rite Masonry," *Heredom*, vol. 4, 1995, p. 190; Alain Bernheim, "Notes on Early Freemasonry in Bordeaux (1732–1769)," *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, vol. 101 (1988), pp. 90, 100. For the other bodies, see Samuel H. Baynard, Jr., *History of the Supreme Council, 33°*, 2 vols. (Boston: Supreme Council, 33°, N.M.J.), vol. 1, pp. 97–100.

In an earlier paper I mistakenly referred to *La Triple Union* Chapter of Rose Croix (1797) as a body of the Order of the Royal Secret. In fact it was a chapter of the Royal Order of Scotland. "The High Degrees in the United States: 1730–1830," *The Philalethes*, vol. 51, no. 2, Apr. 1998, p. 36.

There are suggestions of other bodies. For example, a certificate and two patents issued in 1768 by Francken to Jeremiah van Rennselaer, Samuel Stringer, and Moses M. Hays hint at a Council of Princes of the Royal Secret. The documents were issued "under the Celestial Canopy of the Zenith which answers to 41 Deg[rees]: 30 M[inutes]: N[orthern]: L[atitute]:" which corresponds to Newport, Rhode Island, the 1774 residence of Hays. No other evidence for the council exists. Alain Bernheim, "Questions About Albany," pp. 157–61, 166.

"A 'Sovereign Chapter of Rose Croix [de Heroden]' was also constituted in Charleston prior to 1802.... But neither the Supreme Council's Manifesto nor Mackey's manuscript History, nor any other work which we have been able to find, discloses the former's date or source of authority." Charles S. Lobinger, *The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry* (Louisville, Ky.: Standard Printing, 1932), p. 150. The existence of this chapter is confirmed by the *Annual Register of the Brethren who Compose the Sublime Grand Lodge of Perfection of South Carolina* (Charleston, S.C.: T.E. Bowen, 1802), reproduced in Ray Baker Harris, *History of the Supreme Council, 33°*, ... *Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A.: 1801–1861* (Washington: Supreme Council, 33°, S.J., 1964), pp. 306–16.

⁹ «GreetingLine (InsertChampFusion)», "The High Degrees in the United States," p. 36.

in America through 1800; ten of these dealt with precursors of the Scottish Rite.¹⁰ For the interested student of Masonry, these ten books provided hints of knowledge beyond that found in lodges of English origin.

1787—*The Memorial of Lodge, No. 40, on the Registry of Pennsylvania, to the Right Worshipful Grand Lodge.* This ten-page pamphlet is a complaint that the Grand Lodge of Ancient York Masons of South Carolina (the Ancients' Grand Lodge) was formed irregularly. However, page 5 gives intriguing hints of a form of Freemasonry different from that in England. "Brother Joseph Myers, Junr. was then, and actually is (under the jurisdiction of the late Prussian Monarch) an Inspector General and Grand Master of and over the Ineffable Degrees of Masonry. The second, brother James Fallon, is and was a regular Past-Master ... made and installed in a ... Lodge of Ineffable Masons at Philadelphia, under a regular commission...."¹¹

1797—[Charles Louis Cadet de Gassicourt], *The Tomb of James Molai.* This is a 22-page translation of the 1796 French original. Page 8 explains that Jacques de Molay established four chapters with twenty-seven members each who have special privileges in Masonic Lodges: "When they enter a Lodge they have the exclusive right of crossing in the middle of the carpet which is opposite the throne. All Freemasons of Lodges are ignorant who they are."

1797—Thomas Smith Webb, *The Freemason's Monitor; or, Illustrations of Masonry.* This was the first American "monitor" of Masonic degrees, giving prayers, charges, and non-secret portions of ritual. It was widely distributed, translated into Spanish, and went through several editions before his death. Part II of this book has descriptions of the eleven degrees of a Lodge of Perfection on pages 227–66, including information about who replaced Hiram Abiff at King Solomon's temple, how the ruffians were dealt with, and how the lost word was recovered. Webb's *Monitor* was extremely influential in establishing and disseminating the "standard American" ritual. Its widespread popularity must have brought the Sublime Degrees to the curious attention of many American Masons.

1798—John Robison, *Proofs of a Conspiracy against All the Religions and Governments of Europe.* This is the first American edition of this influential book, which created hysteria at the idea that the Illuminati were secretly infiltrating the governments of the world and possibly America. On page 384 Robison comments on Abbé Barruel's rituals of the Knight of the Sun and Knight Rose Croix. Here is another instance of tantalizing references to Masonic degrees unfamiliar to most American Masons.

1798—John Robison, *Proofs of a Conspiracy.* The second American edition.

1799—Augustin de Barruel, *Memoirs, Illustrating the History of Jacobinism, Vol. I.* Because there were three separate printers for the four volumes, Walgren assigns each a separate entry in his bibliography. There are more provoking hints of unseen forces in Freemasonry: "occult lodges" (which de Barruel termed "*arrieres loges*").

1799—Augustin de Barruel, *Memoirs, Illustrating the History of Jacobinism, Vol. II.* The reader can find descriptions of the Degree of Elect (page 161), Knight of the Sun (page 163n), higher degrees of Scotch Masonry (pages 163–68), Degree of Rose Croix (pages 168–72), Mystical Masonry (pages 172–74), and Knight Kadosh (pages 174–75).

1799—Augustin de Barruel, *Memoirs, Illustrating the History of Jacobinism, Vol. III.* This volume deals specifically with Weishaput's degrees of Illuminism, but to the general Masonic reader it all points to even more continental degrees unknown to English lodges.

1799—Augustin de Barruel, *Memoirs, Illustrating the History of Jacobinism, Vol. IV.* Further mention of continental degrees: African Brethren, Knights of the Eagle, the Adept, the Sublime Philosopher (page 81); Knights of Palestine, Knights Kadosh, Scotch Directory (pages 97–

¹⁰ Kent Walgren, *Freemasonry, Anti-Masonry and Illuminism in the United States, 1734–1850: A Bibliography*, 2 vols. (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 2003), vol. 1, pp. 3–134.

¹¹ All comments on these ten books are from Kent Walgren, "A Bibliography of Pre-1851 American Scottish Rite Imprints," *Heredom*, vol. 3 (1994), pp. 61–67; spelling corrections have been made in this transcription.

100); Scotch Architect (page 328).

1800—Robert Griffith Wetmore, *A Feeble Attempt to Promote the Felicity of Campbell's Mark Master's Lodge in Duanesburgh*, [New York]. On page 6 Wetmore says, “When I first became your neighbor, I was in Possession of thirty degrees in Masonry (including those styled ineffable) and therefore considered myself as having arrived to the ne plus ultra...”

Webb's *Freemason's Monitor* was the first authoritative guide to working the ten degrees and orders of American York Rite: Craft (three degrees), Royal Arch (four degrees), and Knights Templar (three orders). It also gave exciting information about an exotic type of Masonry known to few American Masons and must have generated great curiosity among its readers. A typical American lodge room was rather simply decorated with pillars in the west, an altar in the center, and an illuminated “G” in the east. Compare this austerity with the lavish description Webb gives for just one of the Ineffable Degrees.

Observations on the Degree of Provost and Judge.

This lodge is adorned with red, and lighted by five great lights; one in each corner, and one in the center. The master is placed in the East, under a blue canopy, surrounded with stars, and is stiled [*sic*], Thrice Illustrious.¹²

The Worshipful Master of an American Craft or Blue Lodge wore his usual clothes with a ribbon around his neck from which hung a square. His apron was probably homemade and decorated by his wife, sister, or mother. There are many images of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin in such simple but dignified attire. Again compare the description Webb gives to the luxurious dress of the presiding officer of the “Degree of Knights of the Ninth Arch, or Royal Arch.”

The most potent grand master, representing Solomon in the east, [*is*] seated in a chair of state, under a rich canopy, with a crown on his head, and a scepter in his hand. He is dressed in royal robes of yellow, and an ermined vestment of blue satin, reaching to the elbows; a broad purple ribbon from the right shoulder to the left hip, to which is hung a triangle of gold.¹³

After being enticed since the 1760s with allusions to and hints of mysterious Masonic degrees preserving the full story of the Craft, American Masons were given clear information in 1802. The Mother Supreme Council published its *Circular throughout the Two Hemispheres*, announcing itself and explaining the degrees under its control. The *Circular* can be viewed as a wonderfully written sales brochure, enticing candidates to join by explaining why the Ineffable and Sublime Degrees are necessary to fully understand Freemasonry. It gave many examples of why the High Degrees are both superior and essential.

- The Supreme Council alone is governed with historically correct documents.

Much of the history of Masonry in the early ages is so mixed with fable and enveloped with the rust of time that little satisfaction can be obtained; but as we approach nearer to our own times we have authentic records for our government.¹⁴

- The first three degrees are only a preparation for the higher degrees.

[The three first, or Blue Degrees,] were formed as the test of the character and capacity of the initiated, before they should be admitted to the knowledge of the more important mysteries.

- The true Master's Word was lost to the Blue Degrees with the death of Hiram Abiff, but the Ineffable and Sublime Degrees still possess it.

It is well known to the Blue Master that King Solomon and his Royal visitor were in

¹² Thomas Smith Webb, *Freemason's Monitor; or, Illustrations of Masonry*, 2nd ed. (New York: Southwick and Crooker, 1802), p. 233.

¹³ Webb, p. 244.

¹⁴ Supreme Council, *Circular throughout the Two Hemispheres*. All further quotes from this section are from the *Circular*.

possession of the real and pristine word, but of which he must remain ignorant, unless initiated into the sublime degrees.

- The Ineffable and Sublime Degrees have preserved their ceremonies uncorrupted.

Much variety and irregularity have unfortunately crept into the Blue degrees in consequence of ... those who are unacquainted with the Hebrew language, in which all the Words and Pass-Words are given ... Not so the superior degrees, they appear in that Sublime dress which their founders gave them....

- The Ineffable and Sublime Degrees continue the tradition of the crusaders and base their degrees on authentic records discovered in Palestine.

While [27,000 Masons accompanying the Christian Princes in the Crusades were] in Palestine, they discovered several important Masonic manuscripts, among the descendants of the ancient Jews, which enriched our Archives with authentic written records, and on which, some of our degrees are founded.

From the introduction of the Royal Arch in 1753 to the *Circular throughout the Two Hemispheres* in 1802, American Masons had been advised directly and indirectly that the Craft degrees didn't tell the entire story of Masonry. Not every Mason was induced to pursue further light, but for those that were, it must have been challenging to know when to stop. Suggestions of yet one further revelation—perhaps the *ne plus ultra*—might come with the next visitor from overseas, in the latest publication, or at the hands of an itinerant Masonic lecturer.

The Spread of the High Degrees by Masonic Lecturers

Freemasonry came to the United States from many sources and in varied forms. The early lodges had little guidance for their rituals and ceremonies, probably relying on equal doses of oral tradition and printed exposures. Four ritual exposures were published in America before 1801, all reprints of English originals: *The Mystery of Free-Masonry* (1730); *Masonry Dissected* (1749/50); *Hiram: Or the Grand Master-Key* (1768); and *Jachin and Boaz* (1774–1801). “Prior to the publication of Morgan’s work, [*Illustrations of Masonry by one of the fraternity* (1826)], [*Jachin and Boaz*] was the most important exposé published on American soil, and greatly aided ritual uniformity.”¹⁵ While there were doubtless other imported exposures available, it was *Jachin and Boaz* with its Antient working that most influenced American ritual. It went through ten American editions before 1801, while the other three American exposures were never reprinted.¹⁶ We may infer from its popularity that *Jachin and Boaz* was used widely, if informally, by American lodges to guide their ritual.

Nature abhors a vacuum, and into the vacuum of American Masonic ritual appeared itinerant Masonic lecturers. These uniquely American entrepreneurs traveled the country teaching uniform workings of the three Craft Degrees, the four degrees of the American Royal Arch system (Mark Master Mason, Past Master, Most Excellent Master, and Royal Arch), and “side” degrees. The great unifier of American ritual was Thomas Smith Webb, who is known to have used *Jachin and Boaz* to teach his students.¹⁷ Webb formalized the ceremonies in *Jachin and Boaz*, adjusted the language to American vernacular, and filled in the procedural gaps. He extended the language and forms of his Craft work to the Royal Arch and taught and certified other lecturers. In 1797 Webb published *The Freemason’s Monitor*, which was a teaching tool that helped cement his ritual codification. As noted before, it also must have piqued interest in the high degrees.

¹⁵ Arturo de Hoyos, “David Bernard’s *Light on Masonry*: An ‘Anti-Masonic Bible,’” *Heredom*, vol. 12 (2004), to be published.

¹⁶ Walgren, *Freemasonry: A Bibliography*, vol. 2, p. 993.

¹⁷ “[Solomon Southwick] obtained possession of a printed copy of the very identical edition of JACHIN AND BOAZ, out of which he was himself taught the first three degrees of Masonry, by the late Thomas S. Webb.... Mr. Webb lectured them from it, as he did me....” *National Observer*, vol. II (Albany, May 23, 1828), no. 44, whole No. 122, [p. 4], quoted in de Hoyos.

Little is known about the business practices of Masonic lecturers, but we can make some reasonable inferences from the 1782–1808 register of Abraham Jacobs and the 1817–1820 diary of Jeremy Ladd Cross.¹⁸ If we assume that each Inspector of the Order of the Royal Secret was an itinerant lecturer of some sort, then perhaps a total of 100 to 150 such peddlers offered their services to Masonic bodies and individual Masons. In addition to “lecturing” on the Craft and Royal Arch Degrees (which meant teaching the ritual and floor work from memory), these lecturers sold or gave side degrees to their customers and chartered various bodies under their authority.

Jeremy Cross’s diary gives us a good idea about the business of a successful lecturer. While his diary entries are for 1817 to 1820, finances then could not have been too different from the period before 1801. His fee for lecturing for a day in 1817 seems to have been \$4, about \$55 in 2003, and he established Councils of Select Masters for \$20, about \$275 today.¹⁹ He became a Masonic lecturer in 1814, but by 1818 was still in debt and hoping to settle down.²⁰ On August 17, 1817, he started out from Haverhill, New Hampshire, traveling by coach and boat, and arrived in Richmond, Virginia, on December 4, a trip of 635 miles. He often stayed with Masons and regularly dined with them even when he stayed in a hotel. During the seventeen-week trip to Richmond, he established at least six Councils of Select Masters (\$120/\$1,650) and spent some twenty-nine days lecturing in Lodges and Chapters (\$116/\$1,595). His total income for the trip down to Richmond was about \$236/\$3,245.

To get a very rough estimate of his expenses, note that during his stay in Washington, D.C., he paid \$8.75 for 3 1/2 days room and meals at Thomas Crafford’s Union Hotel, or \$2.50 per day.²¹ The cost for lodging in smaller towns must have been less, say about \$1.50–2.00 per day. If he used hotels or taverns for one-half to two-thirds of his trip and stayed with brothers the rest of the time, then he spent about \$90–\$160 on lodging, very nearly half of his income. By the time we add in his transportation and miscellaneous expenses, it’s easy to see why after four years of lecturing he was still in debt.

His diary is imprecise on the number of Councils created, the days of paid lecturing, and his fees, but we can still get a feel for the economics of his 1817 trip from New Hampshire to Virginia by looking at his diary entries for October 9–16, 1817, a particularly busy eight days for him.

J. L. Cross’s Diary for October 9–16, 1817²²	Comments
9th. At 4:00 A.M. I took my seat in the stage and by 8:00 I arrived at Lantwecks Bridge, a small village south of New Castle, [Delaware] stopped at a small Tavern.... I met the Brethren in the Eve and gave a Lecture.	• \$4 for lecturing
10th. Spent the day with Maj. Moody in	<i>The “further chat with the</i>

¹⁸ Abraham Jacobs’ register is in the archives of the Supreme Council, 33°, N.M.J., Lexington, Mass., and was excerpted from Jul. 22, 1782, to Nov. 26, 1808, in Robert B. Folger, *The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, in Thirty-Three Degrees* (New York: By the author, 1862, 1881), Appendix, pp. 71–110. Jeremy Ladd Cross’s diary from Aug. 17, 1817, to Apr. 2, 1820, was published in Eugene E. Hinman, et al., *A History of the Cryptic Rite*, 2 vols. (N.p.: General Grand Council, 1931), vol. 2, pp. 1223–98.

¹⁹ Samuel H. Williams, “What is the Relative Value?” *Economic History Services*, Apr. 2004, URL: <http://www.eh.net/hmit/compare/>. Any comparison of values over 200 years is tenuous. Nonetheless the comparisons we give provide a passable approximation.

²⁰ “About 4 years since [June 5, 1818,] I commenced the occupation of a Masonic Lecturer... I now think that if I were free from debt and had any other way of acquiring a livelihood I should become quite domesticated.” Cross diary, Jun. 5, 1818, and May 2, 1818, Hinman reprint, pp. 1257 & 1266.

²¹ Cross diary, Dec. 2, 1817, Hinman reprint, p. 1,240.

²² Cross diary, Oct. 1817, Hinman reprint, pp. 1231–234. Spelling and punctuation have been regularized to modern usage.

J. L. Cross's Diary for October 9–16, 1817²²	Comments
viewing the small but pleasant village. I spent the evening at his house ... and returned [to the Tavern and] had some further chat with the Brethren & received my penny.	<i>Brethren</i> ” might mean lecturing, and “received my penny” means he was paid. • \$4 for lecturing? RECEIVED: \$8 for lecturing October 9 & 10
11th. After breakfast I started for Dover, [Delaware] ... and arrived in Dover about 2:00 P.M. I soon became acquainted with the Hon. William Hall.... Lectured with the Companions in the Evening—	• \$4 for lecturing
12th. Sunday. ...	<i>Cross faithfully observed the Sabbath and did no work on the day.</i>
13th. Spent the day mostly with Br. Hall. In the Eve I met the Companions. Exhibited the work in the Chapter and established a Council of Select Masters.	<i>This could be private instructions for Br. Hall.</i> • \$4 for lecturing • \$20 for a Council of Select Masters
14th. Spent the day with Bro. Hall and the Eve with the Companions.	<i>This could be more private instructions for Br. Hall.</i> • \$4 for lecturing?
15th. ... gave some directions to lay out \$20 in provisions &c &c.	<i>Ordering \$20 in provisions indicates he probably stayed at a tavern.</i>
16th. Settled with the Companion and received my wages, took dinner with [Dr.] Naudim and at 2 P.M. took the stage and rode to Milford, [Delaware] where I [arrived] at sun down. Stopped at Mr. Godwin's Hotel.	RECEIVED: \$32 for lecturing October 11, 13, & 14 and for establishing the Council of Select Masters on October 13

A \$4 daily lecturing fee appears to have been the accepted rate. The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts on July 22, 1805, appointed Benjamin Gleason to be Grand Lecturer, and after one year lecturing the Massachusetts lodges he received \$1,000 or about \$15,600 in 2003.²³ If Gleason lectured about twenty-one days a month, then he received about the same compensation per lecture as Cross.

Cross's fortunes as a lecturer significantly improved in May 1818 when the Grand Lodge of Connecticut appointed him “Grand Lecturer, to visit the several Lodges in this jurisdiction, and instruct them in the correct mode of working and lecturing; and that each subordinate Lodge be required to pay into the Treasury of the Grand Lodge the sum of ten dollars, at or before the next Grand Communication, for the purpose of defraying the expense of such visitation.” Further, “each Lodge shall pay Bro. Cross' expenses when actually employed by such Lodge in giving lectures and instructions; and no Lodge shall be bound to pay said sum of ten dollars, unless they first have had the benefit of said lectures at least two and a half days.”²⁴ Cross was now making the “standard” \$4

²³ *Proceedings of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: 1792–1815* (Cambridge, Mass.: Caustic-Claflin Co., 1905), pp. 287, 288, 358.

²⁴ E.G. Storer, *The Records of Freemasonry in the State of Connecticut with a Brief Account of its Origin in New England and the Entire Proceedings of the Grand Lodge from its first Organization, A.L. 5789* (New Haven, Conn.: E.G. Storer, 1859), pp. 293, 294.

per day *plus* expenses, and he had more-or-less guaranteed employment with each of the Connecticut lodges. In 1818 there were about fifty-eight lodges in Connecticut,²⁵ which would generate about \$580/\$9,048 in lecturing fees; he also instituted about a dozen Councils of Select Masters for another \$240/\$3,744. Another boost to his prosperity came in 1819 when he published *The True Masonic Chart; or, Hieroglyphic Monitor*. This popular book went through eight editions by 1850 and was followed by *The Templar's Chart or Hieroglyphic Monitor* in 1820 (two editions by 1850) and a business of selling engraved aprons and other Masonic supplies.

Abraham Jacobs does not appear to have lectured in the Craft degrees, nor does his register indicate what his fees were. However, we know that Cross and Gleason received \$4 per day to instruct in the seven Craft and Royal Arch Degrees at about this same time and that Cross received \$20 to establish a Council of Select Masters, conferring only one degree. Further, in 1806 Antoine Bideaud of the Southern Supreme Council conferred the 4° through 32° in New York City on J.J.J. Gourgas and four others for \$46, or about \$1.50 per degree.²⁶ Thus it is not unreasonable to suppose that Jacobs received \$10–20 per individual when he conferred the thirteen degrees of the Lodge of Perfection and the Council of Princes of Jerusalem, perhaps giving a discount for a larger class of candidates.

On November 9, 1790, Moses Cohen initiated Jacobs “a Knight of the Sun, with full power to initiate brethren and constitute Lodges,” and this is what he did.²⁷ He conferred the Ineffable, Sublime, and other “side” degrees to supplement his income from teaching Hebrew. While his register gives no information about his income, it does give us insight as to how he conferred degrees, from which we can conjecture the methods of other Inspectors.

On nineteen days from June 10 to July 3, 1792, Jacobs conferred the thirteen degrees from Secret Master through Prince of Jerusalem on sixteen brothers in Augusta, Georgia. His register entry for June 14 was typical of how the degrees were conferred.

June 14th. This day conferred the degrees of *Provost and Judge* on Brother Zimmerman and Prescott, also the degrees of *Intendant of the Building*, or Grand Master in Israel. Brother James Gardner attended and received the degrees of *Secret Master* and *Perfect Master*, with every requisite instruction.²⁸

Usually one or two degrees were conferred each evening, but since not everyone could be present, degrees were repeated, as on June 14. Jacobs had no assistance in conferring the degrees, and so the ceremonies were anything but “full form.” It is reasonable to ask: Why did it take so many evenings to confer the degrees? The explanation may be in the phrase from June 14 in Jacobs’ register, “with every requisite instruction.”

Arturo de Hoyos, Grand Archivist and Grand Historian of the Supreme Council, 33°, S.J., believes that Jacobs dictated the ceremonies to the candidates, and they transcribed the rituals for their personal use. In support of this contention, the Archives of the Supreme Council, 33°, S.J., have several small unbound books with individual degrees transcribed into them. Consider the title page of one undated book with the Knight of Kadosh rituals written on fifty-eight of sixty-four 12×16.5 cm pages.

²⁵ Joseph K. Wheeler, *The Centennial: One Hundredth Anniversary of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Connecticut* (Hartford, Conn.: Peck & Prouty, 1890), p. 109.

²⁶ Baynard, Jr., *History of the Supreme Council*, vol. 1, p. 153.

²⁷ Abraham Jacobs, *Register. Rules and Statutes of the Sublime Degrees, of Masonry*, Folger reprint, p. 77.

²⁸ Jacobs, *Register*, Folger reprint, p. 85.

Knight of Kadoch
or White & Black Eagle
Inspector of all lodges
Grand Elect
~~24th~~
29th degree
Gd elected Knt of
*Kadosh*²⁹

What is significant is that “24th” is marked out and replaced by “29th.” Prior to 1801 the Degree of Kadosh was the twenty-fourth in the Order of the Royal Secret, but the *Circular throughout the Two Hemispheres* lists the Kadosh as the twenty-ninth degree (and it later became the thirtieth). Thus de Hoyos dates the manuscript to sometime before 1801. It was prepared under the aegis of the Order of the Royal Secret, but soon after its owner must have transferred allegiance to the new Supreme Council and the ritual was renumbered and renamed in a different hand. Note that it was only necessary to renumber degrees above 22°, Prince Libanus, since the two systems agree through there, and it is only such renumbered degree books that can be confidently dated as being written before 1801. The Supreme Council invited all holders of patents from the Order of the Royal Secret to turn them in and receive a patent from the new body.

Few of these books are extant for probably several reasons. First, there were never very many recipients of these degrees, as witnessed by the few bodies established before 1801 and the paucity of comments in Grand Lodge proceedings. Next, during the American Anti-Masonic Period of 1826–42 renouncing Masons were encouraged to destroy all of their Masonic paraphernalia. Finally, no less an authority than Albert Pike encouraged the destruction of earlier and unapproved versions of Scottish Rite degrees and recommended that “old and worthless cahiers of degrees, be committed to the flames.”³⁰

We can now assemble a model of how the Inspectors spread the high degrees. Armed with their patents, they gathered from one to several candidates, summarized the degree ceremonies, and taught the words and grips. After each abbreviated ceremony the Inspectors dictated the rituals to the new members who transcribed them for their personal use. Some Inspectors, like Abraham Jacobs, encouraged their candidates to apply for warrants from appropriate authority, though obviously few followed through.³¹ Unfettered by Grand Lodge regulations the Inspectors were free to peddle their wares wherever they found willing candidates. Their customers, either lured by sales pitches for exclusive degrees or drawn by the promise of further light in Masonry, eagerly paid for the information. The degrees were conferred as well as possible by the Inspector with perhaps a few

²⁹ The text “29th degree Gd elected Knt of Kadosh” is in a different hand from the original title, and beneath it is marked “C. W. Moore” in a third hand. 29° Mss., N.P., N.D., Early S.C., Archives, Supreme Council, 33°, S.J., U.S.A.

³⁰ “It was ordered that all rituals of the 18th, 30th and 33d Degrees in this Jurisdiction, which have not been prepared under the supervision, or with the approval of the Supreme Council be destroyed wherever they can be obtained, and that all members of the Rite be requested to carry this resolution into effect, so far as it may be in their power to do so.” *Transactions of the Supreme Council of Sovereign Grand Inspectors General of the Thirty-Third and Last Degree, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States of America, at Four Several Sessions Holden ... 1861, ... 1862, ... 1865, ... 1866* (New York: Masonic Publishing and Manufacturing Co., 1866), p. 12.

“I [Pike] have made a thorough examination of the Registers, Letters, and other documents in our Archives,—some of which I found to be worthless, and many of great value. I have taken steps to have all that *are* of any value, bound, that they may be preserved. ... I recommend that this course be adopted with all that is worthy of preservation; and that all with is *not*, and especially the old and worthless cahiers of degrees, be committed to the flames.” *Transactions of the Supreme Council of Sovereign Grand Inspectors General of the Thirty-Third and Last Degree, Ancient and Accepted Rite, for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States of America* (New York: Macoy and Sickels, Oct. 1860), p. 18.

³¹ “July 3d, [1792]. ... On condition that [Brothers Milton, McCall, Urquhart, Gardner, and Zimmerman] would apply to the Council [of Princes of Jerusalem] in Charleston for instructions requisite, that was not in my power to give them I advanced the above named brethren to the degree of Princes of Jerusalem...” Jacobs, *Register*, Folger reprint, p. 88.

brothers assisting. The new candidates were then permitted to transcribe the rituals for their later study and use, perhaps in organizing a high-degree body with a warrant.

The Operation of High Degree Bodies in America before 1801

According to the first U.S. census in 1790, the total population was 3,893,635, and the five largest cities were New York City (33,131), Philadelphia (28,522), Boston (18,320), Charleston, S.C. (16,359), and Baltimore (13,503). Five high-degree bodies were located in three of the five largest American cities, with Charleston alone accounting for three bodies. Albany (3,498) was the nineteenth largest American city and had one body. The surprise location for a high degree body is Holmes' Hole on the island of Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. The 1790 census shows only about 350 people in the town, though the surrounding Dukes County had a population of 3,245, which if it were a city would have ranked it as the twentieth largest. Thus the bodies of the Order of the Royal Secret were mostly located in the largest urban centers, which should have given them excellent exposure to Masons.³²

We have very few extant records of any of these bodies.

- The first *hauts grades* body in the U.S. was established in New Orleans. *Loge de Parfaits d'Écosse* opened there on April 12, 1764, and worked the "Bordeaux system," but being first did not guarantee longevity.³³ Shortly after France ceded New Orleans to Spain through the 1763 Treaty of Paris, Freemasonry either went underground or died out completely in the city. Only one document remains of *Parfaits d'Écosse*, the minutes of two meetings; we know nothing about its operations or influence.³⁴ The *hauts grades* did not formally return to New Orleans until 1807.³⁵

- The Ineffable Lodge of Perfection of Albany was chartered by Henry Andrew Francken in 1768. Its register is in the archives of the Supreme council, 33°, N.M.J., and records 123 meetings from 1768 to 1774, with no meetings held in 1772. The extant minutes are banal, and do not reflect the promise of the sublime perfection of Craft Masonry.³⁶

- The Minute Book of the Lodge of Perfection in Philadelphia, established by Solomon Bush, has been preserved by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania and was reprinted in 1915. It records the meetings from the first in 1781 to the abrupt last one in 1789. While the members did write to Frederick the Great, the proceedings are otherwise unexceptional.³⁷

- Isaac Da Costa organized the Sublime Grand Lodge of Perfection in Charleston in 1783. "On the 13th of June 5796 the Lodge room, records, jewels and furniture of the Ineffable Lodge of Perfect and Sublime Masons were consumed by fire, which, added to other causes, suspended the meetings of the of the Sublime Lodge (except some occasional ones for special purposes)...."³⁸

³² It is important to note that the 1790 population numbers included slaves: U.S., 694,280 out of 3,893,635 or 18%; New York City, 2,369 out of 33,131 or 7%; Philadelphia, 210 out of 28,522 or 1%; Boston, 0 out of 18,320; Charleston, 7,684 out 16,359 or 47%; Baltimore, 1,255 out of 13,503 or 9%; Albany, 572 out of 3,498 or 16%; Martha's Vineyard, 0 out of 350. Freemasons would have come only from the free population. *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790: New York* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), pp. 8, 9; *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790: Pennsylvania* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), p. 10; *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790: Massachusetts* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), pp. 8, 10; *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790: South Carolina* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), p. 9; *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790: Maryland* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1907), p. 9; Charles E. Banks, *The History of Martha's Vineyard, Dukes County, Massachusetts*, 3 vols. (originally published 1911.), vol. 1, pp. 28–30, quoted at http://history.vineyard.net/dukes/bnk1_28.htm.

³³ The evolving "Bordeaux system" is discussed in Alain Bernheim, "Early Freemasonry in Bordeaux," pp. 33–132. Bordeaux produced both Etienne Morin and the Order of the Royal Secret.

³⁴ Herbert H. Stafford, trans., Sharp document No. 64, Sharp-Bordeaux Translations, Archives, Supreme Council, 33°, S.J., U.S.A.

³⁵ Walgren, "An Historical Sketch," pp. 190, 191; Bernheim, "Early Freemasonry in Bordeaux," pp. 90, 100

³⁶ Bernheim, "Questions About Albany," pp. 139–87.

³⁷ Julius F. Sachse, *Ancient documents relating to the A. and A. Scottish Rite in the Archives of the R.W. Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, 1915).

³⁸ "Copy of the Bye-Laws of the Sublime Grand Lodge of South Carolina," *Official Bulletin of the Supreme Council of the 33d*

- Five years after Da Costa organized the Lodge of Perfection in Charleston, Barend M. Spitzer, Abraham Forst, Joseph M. Myers opened a Grand Council of Princes of Jerusalem in 1788 in the city. Its jurisdiction over Lodges of Perfection and Councils of Princes of Jerusalem was recognized at least by Abraham Jacobs who instructed his initiates to apply to Charleston for a charter.³⁹

- King Solomon's Lodge of Perfection at Holmes' Hole (now Tisbury), on the island of Martha's Vineyard, was created by Moses Michael Hays, Deputy Inspector General, in 1791, when he was serving as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts (Antients). In 1797 the body surrendered its charter to the Grand Lodge and received a new charter with the same name but solely as a Craft Lodge. King Solomon's Lodge of Perfection surrendered its jewels, charter, and records in 1822, and all were destroyed when the Grand Lodge in Boston burned.⁴⁰

- Henry Wilmans, "Grand Inspector, General," established a Lodge of Perfection in Baltimore, but the only remaining document is the "Constitution and Laws of the Grand Elect, Perfect, and Sublime Masons" signed by seventy-seven members in 1792, four of whom became Grand Master of Maryland. There is a reference in 1804 to Concordia Lodge No. 13 of Baltimore settling a rent account with "Sublime Lodge" for \$150. This seems to indicate that the Lodge of Perfection survived at least twelve years. Nothing else is known about it.⁴¹

- Charleston became the center of American high degree Masonry in 1797 when a Sublime Grand Council of Princes of the Royal Secret was opened there under authority from Hyman Isaac Long. This was the last high degree body to be formed before 1801.

The only Ineffable or Sublime bodies still working in 1801 were probably in Baltimore and definitely in Charleston. While not many of these bodies survived more than a few years, those in Charleston provided the fertile ground from which emerged the Supreme Council of the United States. Most of these high-degree bodies operated near several blue lodges and other bodies. Their mere presence brought the Sublime Degrees to the attention of other Masons in their area, but attention was not enough to insure success or interest.

Bodies of the Royal Secret before 1801 operated without any central direction; there was no state or national leadership to direct them. In contrast, there were Grand Lodges in twelve of the original states by 1791, with Delaware forming its Grand Lodge in 1806. Some Grand Lodges permitted their lodges to work the Mark, Royal Arch, and other degrees by virtue of their warrants. By 1801 the York Rite was beginning to take off. There were Grand Chapters of Royal Arch Masons in at least seven states, Royal Arch Masonry was seen as the logical and natural extension of Craft Masonry, and the Knights Templar had a "Grand Encampment in the City of Philadelphia."⁴²

A subtle but important distinction between operations of the York Rite and the Order of the Royal Secret may be that the Ineffable and Sublime degrees had an intellectual appeal, while the York Rite degrees—especially the Chapter degrees—had popular elements of boisterous fun. This

Degree for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States, vol. 8, no. 2 (Sept. 1888), p. 733. This document came from the collection identified by Albert Pike as "Documents copied from the Register of Bro.: Moses Holbrook, 33°." Arturo de Hoyos, Grand Archivist and Grand Historian, Supreme Council, 33°, S.J. has correctly identified the documents as coming from Frederick Dalcho's register on the basis of handwriting comparison.

³⁹ See note 29.

⁴⁰ *Proceedings Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, 1792–1815*, p. 112; Baynard, *History of the Supreme Council*, vol. 1, p. 98. *Proceedings of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the Years 1815 to 1825 Inclusive* (Boston: Caustin-Claflin, n.d.), pp. 428, 624; Banks, *The History of Martha's Vineyard*, "Annals of Tisbury," vol. 2, pp. 70–82, quoted at <http://history.vineyard.net/banks2e.htm>. The 1797 charter was granted to "King Solomon's Lodge of Perfection" though references after 1816 are to "King Solomon Lodge's in Perfection." The earlier name follows the terminology of high degree bodies while the latter does not.

⁴¹ Edward T. Schultz, *History of Freemasonry in Maryland*, 4 vols. (Baltimore: J. H. Mediary, 1884), vol. 1, pp. 327, 333–35.

⁴² Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia had Grand Chapters by 1801. Webb, *Freemason's Monitor*, pp. 288–93; Schultz, *Freemasonry in Maryland*, vol. 1, p. 313.

difference can be seen by the willingness of initiates of the Order of the Royal Secret to pay for the privilege of just transcribing rituals—certainly a scholarly approach to Masonry of greatest appeal to the literate. Few of the men elevated by Inspectors participated in meetings because there were hardly any bodies for them to attend, but they seemed to be satisfied to read and study the rituals.

We really don't know what happened during pre-1801 American Masonic meetings, but the exposures of the American Anti-Masonic Period (ca. 1826–42) let us make tenuous inferences about that earlier era. David Bernard's *Light on Masonry* (1829) was the major exposure of the time, going through five increasingly detailed editions between April and December 1829, and Avery Allyn's *A Ritual of Freemasonry* (1831) was its chief competitor.⁴³ Both books sought to destroy the fraternity by exposing its rituals and portraying it in the worst possible light. Thus any negative depiction must be considered in light of the authors' ultimate goal. Their descriptions reflected local ritual variants that may or may not have been more widely popular. Arturo de Hoyos points out that such variants are an expected consequence of the York Rite's tradition of mouth-to-ear ritual. The written tradition of the Ineffable and Sublime Degrees allows much less variation.

If Bernard's and Allyn's exposures can be believed, the degrees of a Royal Arch Chapter offered participants rowdy, mischievous initiation pranks. These degrees, especially the Royal Arch, provided a logical conclusion to the Master Mason Degree, while seemingly providing some innocent fun during the ceremonies—a popular combination much more successful than merely transcribing and studying rituals. Their descriptions of the Royal Arch Chapter Degrees, the most widely worked of the high degrees, tell of several opportunities to embarrass and surprise the candidates.⁴⁴ Allyn even provided comical drawings of the ceremonies, highlighting the discomfiture of the candidate.⁴⁵

In contrast with the Chapter degrees, their descriptions of “Eleven Ineffable Degrees,” are austere and solemn, almost like historical plays.⁴⁶ Bernard had advanced to the 6°, Intimate Secretary, and Allyn had received none of the Ineffable and Sublime Degrees, so they had little firsthand evidence of what went on in a Lodge of Perfection.⁴⁷ However, neither author would have missed an opportunity to emphasize any negative aspect, even rumored. The simplicity of their descriptions supports the idea that the ceremonies were indeed serious without amusing features for observers. The Ineffable and Sublime Degrees may not have spread rapidly because they lacked the humorous initiation possibilities of the Royal Arch Chapter Degrees. We will likely never know.

Conclusion

The Supreme Council of the United States appeared at a time when American Masons were becoming aware there was Masonic knowledge beyond the Craft Lodge. This awareness was spread by itinerant lecturers, books, and bodies of the Order of the Royal Secret. The Order, with its largely uncontrolled Inspectors, lacked the organizational infrastructure to survive. Its daughter, the Ancient

⁴³ de Hoyos, “David Bernard's *Light on Masonry*,” to be published.

⁴⁴ During the reception of a Mark Master Mason, the candidate was supposedly made to believe that he will be “marked” on his chest with a blow from a chisel and mallet. “This is supposed to be the most interesting part of the degree; and is made so, by the pains taken to frighten the candidate. If the floor, bowl, chisel, and mallet are bespattered with blood, or something which resembles it, and the ‘executioner’ acts his part well, the candidate must necessarily feel very uneasy during the ceremony:—This generally gives great satisfaction to the brotherhood, and is often the subject of their secret discourse for weeks afterwards.” David Bernard, *Light on Masonry*, 1st ed., 3rd state (Utica, N.Y.: William Williams, 1829), p. 98.

⁴⁵ Avery Allyn, *A Ritual of Freemasonry* (Boston: John Marsh, 1831), plates 5 (Master Mason), 7 (Mark Master), 9 (Past Master), 11 (Most Excellent Master), and 15 (Royal Arch).

⁴⁶ Bernard, *Light on Masonry*, pp. 87–144, 183–211. Avery Allyn, *A Ritual of Freemasonry*, pp. 87–164, 278–95. Descriptions of other lesser-known degrees are also simple and austere.

⁴⁷ Bernard apparently was not satisfied with attaining only the 6°, so he exaggerated his Masonic standing in later years and described himself as a “Grand Elect Perfect and Sublime Mason.” (de Hoyos, “David Bernard's *Light on Masonry*,” to be published.)

and Accepted Scottish Rite, had the characteristics that guarantee greatness. In two hundred years it has grown to become the largest and most widespread branch of the Masonic fraternity. Today it has even greater possibilities of greatness than in 1801.

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