



IDAHO KNIGHTLY NEWS

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Editor's Note

If anyone would like to submit an article for the Idaho Knightly News, please email me your article using Microsoft Word. Keep it between 1 page and 1.5 pages.

Upcoming 2023 Events:

Montana Grand York RiteJune 1-3
Triennial (Chapter & Council)..... Aug 14-15

The Sword and the Trowel, Part 4

By Barry E. Newell

Ramsay's Oration

Chevalier Andrew Michael Ramsay is credited with giving a speech that would give birth to the various theories of Masonic Knighthood. He was born on 9 January circa 1681 in Ayr (pronounced "air"), Scotland. After graduating from the University of Edinburgh he was employed (through much of his life) as a tutor to the children of the aristocracy. Ramsay became a Freemason on March 26, 1729, at Horn Lodge in the Palace

Yard in Westminster. In 1730, Ramsay was employed in France and here it is said he was a member of Louis l'Argent Lodge where he held the office of Orator. He is said to have been a Grand Orator, but it seems to be more of an honorary title held between Lodges as at the time there was no Grand Lodge formed in France before 1733. And as Bro. Dafoe puts it in his book, "It was in his capacity as Orator that Ramsay prepared and delivered an address that would form the building blocks upon which chivalric Masonry would rise." This address is said to have been given on March 21, 1737.

One question I had was what motivated him to give such a speech. It is noted by many that in England, Freemasonry was a gentleman's club for those in the upper echelons of society so a legend stemming from workmen did not dissuade them from joining. It is possible that Ramsay was trying to market Freemasonry to the French aristocracy who would not have had any interest in joining an organization that descended from working-class men. This is supported by the Oration itself wherein he talks about not taking the name of 'Freemason' literally and looking to see if there were "religious warriors and princes".

There is very little doubt about the fact that Ramsay invented this chivalric history of Freemasonry, but nonetheless, he sparked the fire that would be the creation of Chivalric Masonic orders. He may not have invented these "high degrees", as they were once called, but he played a very important role. It is important to note that Ramsay did not claim that Freemasonry stemmed from the Knights Templar, but rather from the "Knights of St John of Jerusalem" which was also known as the Knights Hospitaller and continues today as the Sovereign Military Order of Malta. On a side note, this speech led to Pope Clement XII issuing the Papal Bull "In Eminenti Apostolatus" which was the first official edict against Freemasonry.

Whatever his motivation, his speech was the spark that ignited a fire that burned in the hearts of many Masons and which led to the creation of Masonic knighthoods.

Chivalric Masonry

Within the US, the Chivalric Orders are a set of three Orders: Illustrious Order of the Red Cross, Order of Malta, and Order of the Temple (or Knights Templar). The Order of the Temple is one of the most impressive ceremonies in all of Masonry and is the true capstone of the American York Rite. The candidate represents one seeking admittance as a Knights Templar during the Crusades. The candidate is put through several trials to ensure he is worthy. Once proven worthy the candidate is admitted a Sir Knight of the Valiant and Magnanimous Order of the Temple.

I moved into talking about American Chivalric Masonry as it is very difficult to trace the early development of the Order of

the Temple. The earliest record of a Templar organization is in Scotland and Ireland in the mid-1700s. One such reason for the difficulty is due to careless record-keeping or from disasters such as the Grand Secretary of Canada's house burning down and losing all of their early records. Masonic Templary came to America through the British military and merchants. The earliest mention of Knights Templar is to be found in the records of St. Andrew's Royal Arch Lodge (they'd be called Chapters later) on August 28, 1769, when William Davis received; William Davis was a Captain in the Massachusetts militia and took part in the Battle of Bunker Hill. Some fun facts, the second recorded conferral of the Order of the Temple in America occurred on December 11, 1769, and the candidate's name was Paul Revere. The third Templar was Joseph Warren, a general who lost his life at the Battle of Bunker Hill.

Now I had to give this introduction of Chivalric Masonry because many of its invitational and appendant bodies stem from the Order of the Temple and yet are tied back to the continuation myths. Now you can't go too far into the history of Chivalric Masonry without discussing the Rite of Strict Observance.