



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:

Triennial (Chapter & Council)..... Aug 14-15
Grand York Rite of CO..... Sep 7-9
Grand York Rite of WY..... Sep 14-17
NW/SW Department Conf..... Oct 20-21

The Sword and the Trowel, Part 5

By Barry E. Newell

Rite of Strict Observance

The Rite of Strict Observance was the brainchild of the D'Aumont legend. This order is said to have been formed some time in the early 1750s in Germany by Karl Gotthelf von Hund, who had been involved with Freemasonry since 1741. Von Hund claimed that he had not founded it, but had

taken over from C.G. Marschall von Bieberstein in 1750. Under von Hund's watch, the Rites degrees consisted of Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, Master Mason, Scottish Master, Novice, and Knights Templar. The Scottish Master's degree concerned itself with the preservation of the lost word of Freemasonry which had been cut on a plate of pure metal, placed in a secure location, and centuries later discovered.

One of the strangest aspects of the Rite of Strict Observance was that the adherence had to swear an oath to blindly follow the directives of Unknown Superiors who ruled the Rite. This invisible leader was said to have possibly been Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender. This was the same man whom Ramsey had tried to tutor some years prior. There is a lack of evidence that supports this idea, but the invisible rulers communicated through von Hund. The order did not develop any widespread appeal for a couple of decades, possibly due to the Seven Years War. From May 23 to July 6, 1775, a convention was held in Brunswick as there was a lot of confusion among the members. Even though they met for some time nothing really came of it other than more confusion among the members. Another convention

was called on August 15, 1776, in Wiesbaden at the request of Baron von Gugumos. During the convention though the members suspected the Baron was a fraud and demanded the Baron do what he promised. The Baron left the convention and never returned to do what he promised.

After von Hund's death on October 28, 1776, the Rite began to go downhill. The Duke of Sudermania, Grand Master of the Swedish Grand Lodge, was elected and installed as Deputy Grand Master of the Rite in 1778. Two years later he resigned. From July 1782 to September 1783, there was a convention held in Wilhelsmbad where it was resolved that the Freemasons were not descendants of the Templars, that there were no "unknown superiors" to hand out instruction, and soon after the Rite came to an end.

Chevaliers Bienfaisants de la Cité Sainte

It should be clarified that the Rite did not die out entirely. It was to be absorbed into an order called the Rectified Rite, also known as the Chevaliers Bienfaisants de la Cité Sainte which translates into Knights Beneficent of the Holy City, that was created by Jean-Baptiste Willermoz in 1774. Willermoz had been a Mason since 1752, was a member of Ordre des Chevaliers Macons Elus-Cohen de l'Univers (a precursor to Martinism), and was initiated into the Rite of Strict Observance in 1773. Although based on the Rite of Strict Observance, this Rectified Rite consists of Apprentice, Fellow Craft, Master, Scottish Master, Esquire Novice, Knights Beneficent of the Holy City, Professed Knight, and Grand Professed Knight.

According to A.E. Waite, Willermoz blended together the forms and doctrines of the two rites, but de-templarized the Rite of Strict Observance and "Martinized" it, which resulted in the Rectified Scottish Rite. Willermoz headed a committee to prepare the rituals of the revised degrees. Much of the work was done, but activity in this rite was interrupted by the eruption of the French Revolution. In 1806 the CBCS became active again, but, due to the political unrest, it soon would pass into Switzerland with the transmission of power to the Directoire of Helvetia; it was this jurisdiction that reinvigorated the Order in France after WWII. Today the body exists in Switzerland, France, England, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Brazil, and the United States.

