

TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

Convention of Royal and Select Masters

HELD AT

MASONIC HALL

IN THE

CITY OF BUFFALO

August 20, 1877

TRANSACTIONS

An adjourned Convention of Royal and Select Masters was held at Masonic Hall in the City of Buffalo, N. Y., August 20, 1877.

The Convention was called to order by the President, Illustrious Companion Josiah H. Drummond.

Representatives were present as follows:

ARKANSAS—	E. H. English, Elias DuVal.
CONNECTICUT—	William Wallace Lee.
FLORIDA—	R. J. Perry.
ILLINOIS—	Arthur R. H. Atkins, Haswell C. Clark.
INDIANA—	George H. Fish, Alexander Thomas, Thomas B. Long.
KANSAS—	John M. Price.
KENTUCKY—	L. D. Croninger, James W. Staton, Henry Bostwick, G. D. Buckner.
LOUISIANA—	Joseph P. Hornor.
MAINE—	Josiah H. Drummond.
MARYLAND—	George L. McCahan, Charles F. Achey.
MASSACHUSETTS—	Charles W. Bromley, Smith B. Harrington.
MINNESOTA—	George W. Cooley.
MISSOURI—	Allan McDowell, Oren Root, Jr.
NEBRASKA—	D. H. Wheeler.
MISSISSIPPI—	H. W. Walter, James M. Howry.

NEW JERSEY—	George Scott.
NEW YORK—	George M. Osgoodby, John B. Hackett, George Van Vliet.
RHODE ISLAND—	John F. Adams.
TENNESSEE—	Benjamin F. Haller, H. M. Aiken, John Frizzell, Joseph H. Bullock.
VERMONT—	Edward S. Dana.
WISCONSIN	William C. Swain.
ONTARIO—	Daniel Spry, J. Ross Robertson, Charles G. Fortier.

Companion Howry, of Mississippi, offered the following resolution:

Resolved, That it is the sense of this Convention, that if the General Grand Chapter of the United States shall sanction the conferring of the Council degrees by the chapters, whenever the Grand Council of any State is willing to concede this right and the Grand Chapter of such State shall accept the same, then this action shall meet our approval.

The resolution was seconded by Companion Lee, and on being put to vote was lost by a vote of 12 to 6.

On motion it was resolved that a committee of five be appointed to memorialize the Grand Encampment to place the Cryptic Degrees in their proper position by making them a prerequisite to the orders of Knighthood.

Carried by a vote of 12 to 6.

The following committee was then appointed:

George M. Osgoodby, of New York.

Alexander Thomas, of Indiana.

Edward S. Dana, of Vermont.

Z. C. Luce, of Iowa.

I. W. Woodhull, of Wisconsin.

On motion, the Convention then adjourned, subject to the call of the President.

TO THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS GRAND MASTERS

OF

GRAND COUNCILS

OF

ROYAL AND SELECT MASTERS

Most Illustrious Companions:

The Convention of Royal and Select Masons, held in Buffalo in 1877, adjourned to meet upon the call of the President.

I have been requested by Most Illustrious George W. Cooley, Grand Master of the Grand Council of Minnesota, in accordance with instructions of his Grand Council, to call a meeting of the Convention in 1880.

Concurring in his views, I hereby give notice that a meeting of that Convention will be held in Detroit, Michigan, on the twenty-third day of August, A. D. 1880, at 8 o'clock in the evening.

It is earnestly desired that all the Grand Councils be represented. If no session of any Grand Council is to be held before that date, it is desired that the Grand Master will take measures to be represented; this can properly be done, as the purpose of the Convention is consultation, and its action only advisory.

That we have arrived at a most important era in the history of Cryptic Masonry, is evident from the situation. The degrees are now conferred in four different ways.

1. *In Chapters, as a part of the regular series of degrees.*

In this class are Virginia and West Virginia, where the degrees are conferred before the Royal Arch, the order being Mark Master, Past Master, Most Excellent Master, Royal Master, Select Master and Royal Arch. A Grand Council was formed in Virginia in 1820, which, yielding to a claim based upon a gross error, in 1841 surrendered the degrees to the Grand Chapter and dissolved.

2. *In Councils appurtenant to Chapters, but otherwise independent of them.*

In this class is Texas, whose Grand Council was dissolved in 1864; since that time, the degrees have been conferred in Councils of a *quasi* voluntary character, claiming to be held under the authority of a Chapter warrant, but entirely separate from the Chapter itself, without control by any Grand Body.

3. *In Councils appurtenant to Chapters, and under the control and authority of Grand Chapters.*

In this class are Arkansas, Iowa, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nebraska, South Carolina and Wisconsin. These Grand Councils have formally dissolved, but, previous to their dissolution they surrendered the degrees (so far as they had the power) to their several Grand Chapters, which accepted the trust and are now undertaking to confer and control the degrees.

The Grand Council of Illinois, in like manner, voted to surrender the degrees to the Grand Chapter, but still claims to be in existence.

Measures, looking ultimately to the same end, but not fully consummated have been taken by the Grand Councils of California, Missouri and North Carolina.

I understand that the Grand Chapter of Nevada (where there has never been a Grand Council) contemplates authorizing its Chapters to confer these degrees in "appurtenant Councils," and the same thing is favored in Oregon: by whose "surrender" they propose to obtain this authority, I am not advised.

Several of these Grand Chapters are awaiting the action of the General Grand Chapter, and I have no doubt that an effort will be made at its next Convocation to adopt the amendments to the Constitution offered by our Mississippi Companions, and now pending, and thus, by endorsing what is known as the "Mississippi Plan," assume control of the Cryptic degrees.

4. *In Council, under the jurisdiction of Grand Councils.*

In this class are Alabama, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee and Vermont, in the United States, and England, Ontario and New Brunswick, abroad.

This unparalleled confusion in the entire policy of the Rite, and necessary conflict even in the rituals of the different jurisdictions, peremptorily call for action to secure uniformity, or for the entire abandonment of the degrees, by the existing Grand Councils.

Experience shows that united action can be secured only by general consultation; and a Convention is the only method of having that.

The more important questions growing out of the situation are the following:

1. Shall the Grand Council system of organization be continued? If not, shall the degrees be abandoned, or the "Mississippi Plan" adopted?

2. If the Grand Council system is to be continued, what measures (if any) shall be taken to prevent a conflict between the Grand Councils and the General Grand Chapter?

3. What rule should be adopted as to the *status* of those who receive the degrees in Chapters, as well as of those who have received the degrees in regular Councils, but have assisted in conferring the degrees in other bodies, or been present when they were thus conferred?

4. What rule ought to be adopted in relation to the jurisdiction in States, etc., in which no regular Grand Council exists?

The enumeration of these questions, of course, in no manner precludes the consideration of others.

Experience has shown that the comparatively brief time during which a Convention can remain in session, does not give opportunity for work by committees upon subjects under consideration; and the necessity of committee work, to secure proper action by any deliberative body, is universally acknowledged: indeed, it may be safely said that the action of the last two Conventions failed to exert its due influence in consequence of the failure to prepare in advance measures for consideration.

To obviate the danger of ill-considered action, I take the liberty of designating Companions to prepare, and have ready for presentation at the opening of the Convention, reports upon the four questions above stated, for the consideration of the Convention, with resolutions embodying such action as they shall recommend should be taken in relation thereto:

- 1.—GEORGE M. OSGOODBY, Buffalo, New York.
GEORGE W. COOLEY, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
WILLIAM W. AUSTIN, Richmond, Indiana.
- 2.—EDWARD S. DANA, New Haven, Vermont.
GEORGE L. MCCAHAN, Baltimore, Maryland.
WILLIAM WALLACE LEE, West Meriden, Conn.
- 3.—CHARLES E. MEYER, Philadelphia, Pa.
GEORGE J. PINCKARD, New Orleans, La.
HUGH McCURDY, Corunna, Michigan.
- 4.—WILLIAM M. CUNNINGHAM, Newark, Ohio.
JOHN H. DERBY, Saco, Maine.
JOHN HAIGH, Somerville, Mass.

Inasmuch as no provision has been made for the expenses of the meetings of committees, I trust the Companions will *at once* proceed, by correspondence, to interchange views, and prepare reports upon the subject committed them: there is ample time for that purpose.

I hope, also, no one of the Companions will ask to be excused, because he may not be a member of the Convention, or not able to attend it, inasmuch as the committees above announced are not committees *of the Convention*, but of *my own*, to assist me in presenting to the Convention matters for its action. And if any of the Companions prefer, they may submit their report to me, and I will have it presented to the Convention by the presiding officer. It would aid very materially, however, in the deliberations of the Convention, if each committee would print its report and circulate copies in advance of the meeting.

Seasonable notice will be given in what hall the Convention will meet: only Companions from jurisdictions in which a regular Grand Council exists will be admitted to participate in the Convention, until it shall otherwise order.

Companions, the time has come for decisive and *final* action in one direction or another: let us, therefore, come together and consult freely, deliberate fully and act wisely, to the end that when we separate, the united approval of our several Grand Councils shall crown our efforts, and the future of the Cryptic Rite be irrevocably settled.

JOSIAH H. DRUMMOND,

President of the National Convention of Royal and Select Masters.

PORTLAND, ME., March 10, 1880.