

HISTORY OF THE YORK RITE IN PENNSYLVANIA

It is well known that the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania is one of the oldest Grand Lodges in the United States. In the same manner, the York Rite of Pennsylvania can trace its roots back to the formative years of Freemasonry.



The Grand Chapter of Pennsylvania was originally controlled by the Grand Lodge and was formed in 1795, being the first to operate continuously into modern times. The Grand Chapter became independent in 1824, but the Grand Lodge retained control of the Past Master Degree, an arrangement that continues to this day. The Grand Chapter of Pennsylvania is one of only a few Grand Chapters not to belong to the General Grand Chapter of the United States of America.

The Grand Council of Pennsylvania was formed in the early 1800's to confer the degrees of Cryptic Masonry in the Commonwealth. The group flourished and established itself as an important member of the York Rite. Today the Grand Council



continues to operate as an independent Grand body, choosing to be unaffiliated with the General Grand Council of the United States of America, and carries on its own traditions.



Pennsylvania is recorded as the first jurisdiction to form and create a Grand Encampment of Knights Templar in 1797. This organization soon dissolved, however, and in 1814 a new Grand Encampment was created. Attempts were made to merge this Grand body together with those of other states to create a national organization, but this did not occur until 1854.

Today, the York Rite in Pennsylvania continues to offer leadership opportunities and further light to its members in local bodies in many towns throughout the state.



**YOUR MASONIC JOURNEY
CONTINUES HERE**



**AN INTRODUCTION TO THE
YORK RITE OF
FREEMASONRY IN
PENNSYLVANIA**

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of Pennsylvania





THE AMERICAN YORK RITE OF FREEMASONRY

The York Rite, as we know it, with the arrangement of the degrees of Capitular, Cryptic, and Chivalric Masonry in this manner is an American innovation, and one of which many Masons are proud to be a part. While the degrees were initially created and worked in England, it was in America that they found their home. You will find York Rite Freemasonry in every state, where it's ideals, philosophy, and feelings of patriotism have made it a permanent fixture on the American landscape.

THE JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME



Serving in the chairs in your Lodge is a rewarding experience that has been proven to enhance a man's character. In the same way the York Rite offers men the opportunity to serve their fellow Masons in new and exciting ways, all the while becoming an active participant in it's lessons and history.

ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER



You come to the degrees of Capitular Masonry as a Master Mason, but it is here that you will truly learn the ways of the craft. You will labor in King Solomon's quarry in the Mark Degree, aiding in the completion of the temple in the Most Excellent Master Degree. Following, you will come upon the summit of Ancient Craft Masonry when you attain the degree of Royal Arch Mason at the building of the second temple.

COUNCIL OF ROYAL & SELECT MASTERS



Having completed the temple, it becomes appropriate for a Royal Arch Mason to know of the secrets he has worked hard to keep. You continue your journey while on a walk with Hiram Abiff in the Royal Master Degree, after which you are taught a proper understanding of Freemasonry in the Select Master Degree. Your Cryptic journey comes to a close in the Super Excellent Master degree, where you will learn of one of history's most tragic events.

COMMANDERY OF KNIGHTS TEMPLAR



As you cross into the Orders of Knights Templar, you will be greeted by your old friend King Darius, and taught the importance of truth. From there, you will encounter a Priory of the Knights of Malta, who will invest you a Knight of St. Paul and the Mediterranean Pass. Finally, your journey will climax as you are greeted as a Christian pilgrim who seeks to join the valiant and magnanimous Order of the Temple, thereby becoming a Knight Templar.

THE YORK RITE IS YOUR RITE!

It is the Commandery of Knights Templar of which you are probably most familiar, as they appear in local parades, and participate in patriotic activities in communities around the Commonwealth. Upon completion of your journey you will be a Sir Knight, and thereby entitled to wear the uniform and chapeau of a Knight Templar, and join your fellow Fraters in these activities!