

THE CRYPTIC FREEMASON

THE ORIGIN OF THE CRYPTIC DEGREES

THE GRAND COUNCIL OF SELECT MASONS
PART 3 - BY RICHARD A. EPPLER, EDITOR

The oldest document mentioning the degree we now call Select Master is a certificate dated November 8, 1790 wherein Moses Cohen, in his capacity of Grand Inspector General of the Council of Emperors of the East and West, certifies that he had conferred several degrees, including the "Select Master of Twenty-Seven" on Abraham Jacobs. This degree is now known to be essentially the same as our Select Master Degree.

How Moses Cohen obtained the degree is not known. Although he was an associate of Stephen Morin, who brought the degrees of the Rite of Perfection from France to the New World in 1761, a letter states that three of Cohen's degrees, including the Select Master of Twenty Seven did not come from Morin. He may have received it in a Lodge of Perfection in Philadelphia that claimed its rituals came from Berlin. In any event, it does identify the Continental European source of the degree in common with that of the Scottish Rite. As such it had some connection with the Rite of Perfection, but not as a part of that Rite. In 1788 Joseph M. Meyers at Charleston, SC presided over a Grand Council of Princes of Jerusalem, and, it is claimed, deposited there a ritual of the Select Master of Twenty Seven Degree from Berlin.

Around 1788, Henry Wilmans (1751-1795) immigrated from Bremen, Prussia to Charleston, SC. Whether he obtained his Masonic degrees there or in Prussia is not known. By 1790 he had moved to Baltimore, MD where, with his brother Charles Wilmans, he entered the importing business. A very active Mason, he was a Past Master of Lodge #13 of Charleston, SC, he was the charter Master of Concordia Lodge in Baltimore 1793, and rose to be Grand Master of Masons in Maryland in 1794. Unfortunately, he died the next year at the age of only forty-four.

In 1792, acting as a Grand Inspector General of the Rite of Perfection, Henry Wilmans established a "Grand Council of Select Masons". Among those he initiated into this body were two eminent Maryland Masons: Philip P. Eckel and his associate Hezekiah Niles. On

Wilman's death, they inherited control of the Grand Council of Select Masons.

Philip P. Eckel was the foremost Mason of his time in Maryland. Like Wilmans, he was a native of Germany, born there in 1768. He came with his father to Baltimore about 1781, where he obtained and held the position of City Gauger for many years. He received his Lodge degrees sometime between the founding of Baltimore Union Lodge No. 29 in 1786 and March 6, 1793, when he withdrew to become a charter member of Concordia Lodge. He was elected Master of Concordia Lodge on December 4, 1797, and served for ten terms. He became Secretary of the Grand Lodge, Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter, General Grand Scribe of the General Grand Chapter, and was the Commander of Maryland Encampment No. 1, Knights Templar. He died suddenly in 1831.

The Grand Council of Select Masons which Philip P. Eckel assumed control of with his Masonic friend Hezekiah Niles was not the permanently organized Grand body we mean by that title today. It was an occasional body of Select Masons who might be available at the time, called together by the leader whenever there was work to be done. Those who happened to be present formed the Council. The power to confer the degree was vested in the presiding officer and those he called to his assistance. This officer was Henry Wilmans from its organization until his death in 1795. After that Philip P. Eckel and Hezekiah Niles succeeded to his powers. This body conferred the degree of Select Master only, as we know from a certificate signed by Eckel himself. Philip P. Eckel did not receive the Royal Master Degree until 1819, when it was conferred on him by Ebenezer Wadsworth of New York.

Thus, by 1814-15 we have the Royal Master Degree being conferred in New York by Columbian Grand Council #1, Royal Master Masons (see the Summer issue); and the Select Master Degree being conferred in Baltimore by Philip P. Eckel and Hezekiah Niles in their Grand Council of Select Masons. In the next (Winter) issue we will discuss how they came together to form the Cryptic Rite.



CRYPTIC MASONRY

BY HUGH MCCURDY OF MICHIGAN

FROM: THE VOICE OF MASONRY - 1880

To Royal and Select Masters are given the keystone in Masonry, more precious than is known by the vast workers of the quarries; and it has truthfully proclaimed that to preserve and transmit our principles to those who succeed us, in the hour of low twelve, is a sacred, bounden duty we owe to Cryptic Masonry. Thus believing, we should often revert to the origin of our Institution, for as has been said, it is only by digging to the foundation and examining each stone minutely that we can rightfully estimate what has been erected thereon. It is so with Freemasonry.

The first Grand Council which assembled at Jerusalem was composed of Solomon, King of Israel; Hiram, King of Tyre, and Hiram Abiff - the three Grand Masters, who, unobserved by "prying eyes," devised the entire plan by which the temple should be erected, how the workmen should be divided into various degrees, each class consisting of an independent body, whereby it might be recognized by the peculiar sign of that degree. Most happily too, they combine within the power of the council the alpha and the omega of Freemasonry, thereby denominating Cryptic Masonry, by way of pre-eminence, the summit and perfection of Ancient Craft Masonry. Thus, in fact, the duties, the powers, the responsibilities of a council, embrace the whole range of Ancient Craft Masonry, from the conception of the idea in the heart until the candidate is in the full possession of our mysteries, or in our own peculiar language, until he has passed the circle of perfection. It is in the secret vault, securely guarded, that the illustrious companions are required not only to search out the truth but to determine plans and design objects for the private as well as general good of the Craft.

If therefore, companions who constitute this class and who have passed the circle of perfection - who have witnessed the wisdom, strength and beauty of our principles, would be but true to their obligations and faithful to their requirements, what immense good could be accomplished. No bickering, no strife and no conflicts could ever exist in the Masonic institution, but peace, concord and tranquility would prevail, and the only contentions in the whole Masonic family of earth would be who can best work and who can best agree. Brotherly love and charity would be happily blended together, and the

life and character of a gentleman, of a faithful brother and devoted companion, would be merged the life and purity of a consistent Mason. With you and all illustrious companions who have entered the secret vault rests the responsibility of confusion ever prevailing in the lodge, chapter or council. Hence you perceive that the charge of a Select Master is literally true when it says to each of you, that your obligations are increased in proportion to your privileges; and also let it be your constant care to prove yourself worthy of the confidence reposed in you and of the high honor conferred on you, in admitting you among Select Masters."

The degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason were originally Ancient Craft Masonry; while the old constitutions gave the Master the right and authority to congregate his members into a chapter for the purpose of conferring the Royal Arch, which originally constituted a part of the Third Degree. In elucidating the Royal Arch it becomes necessary that other degrees should be incorporated into the chapter for the purpose of explaining the various parts of the temple. Hence the Mark and Most Excellent Master's degrees were added and conferred before the Royal Arch.

In process of time it became necessary to establish a Council whose province it should be to "account for the concealment and preservation of those essentials of the Craft which were brought to light at the erection of the second temple, and which lay concealed from the mystic eye four hundred and seventy years." Hence, Cryptic Masonry was inaugurated.

In different countries, different systems prevail to inculcate, enforce and teach Ancient Craft Masonry; but in this country it is confined to the degrees of the lodge, chapter and council. Cryptic Masonry, therefore is contained within the degrees of Royal and Select Masters, and are numbered eight and nine in the York Rite, although in a chronological point of view they are the first and last degrees, hence called the alpha and omega of Ancient Craft Masonry. They illustrate the mysteries of Masonry, and without a full, perfect and complete knowledge of these degrees our Masonic edifice is incomplete and unfinished; or, as has been aptly said, "the degrees of Royal and Select Masters are polished and perfect ashlar, marked and numbered for the building."

Transcribed by: George Helmer FPS, PM Norwood Lodge #90
Grand Lodge of Alberta, Norwood Chapter #18 Grand Chapter of Alberta.

**A NEW RESERACHER JOINS INDIANA CENTER FOR
VASULAR BIOLOGY AND MEDICINE
- SUPPORTED BY CMMRF**

My name is Carmella Evans-Molina. I am an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Indiana University, where I work in the Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism and the Wells Center for Pediatric Diabetes Research. I am also currently working on several collaborative research projects with Dr. Keith March in the Indiana Center for Vascular Biology and Medicine (ICVBM), which is so generously supported by the CMMRF.

I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself and tell you a little bit about my background. I grew up in a very small town in rural West Virginia and attended West Virginia University, where I obtained a bachelor's degree in Pharmacy. I worked for some time in retail pharmacy throughout the coalfields of WV. I was really touched by the multitude of patients that I waited on in the pharmacy who were personally affected by diabetes. I saw how they struggled to adapt to the daily injections of insulin and the many medications that were necessary to treat their diabetes. Given these experiences, I decided to go back to medical school, so that I could serve the complete medical needs of these individuals. I attended medical school at Marshall University in Huntington, WV. This city had the dubious distinction of being named the "Least Healthy City in America"! It was an honor, though, to care for the citizens of my home state and Huntington while I was a medical student.

After graduation, I headed off to Boston, where I completed my residency in Internal Medicine at the Massachusetts General Hospital within the Harvard system. This was a very exciting time in my life, and I became very interested in research during this period. I had the opportunity to work with a fabulous mentor, Dr. Elaine Hylek. We worked on a clinical research project, where we followed individuals treated with blood thinners for heart arrhythmias. After the completion of my residency and three great years in Boston, I decided to move closer home to the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, VA. I completed my Endocrinology and Diabetes Fellowship at UVA. During Fellowship, I really caught the "research bug". I met and trained with a truly amazing mentor, Dr. Raghu Mirmia, who introduced me to new ways of thinking about medical problems

through laboratory-based, basic science research. It was during this time that I made the commitment to a lifetime career in medical research.

In 2008, I joined the faculty at Indiana University, where I have been building my own research program in diabetes and islet biology. My lab is vibrant and positive, and I have a fabulous team working with me every day. Dan Moss functions as my laboratory manager; Tatsu Kono is a post-doctoral fellow, and Geonyoung Ahn works as a technician. As a team, we are currently working on three different types of projects in my lab. We study ways in which the insulin producing beta cells start to fail in Type 2 diabetes. In addition, we study why patients with diabetes develop heart disease. Finally, in collaboration with the ICVBM, we are looking at new treatment strategies for diabetes using stem cells. It is this research that is advancing the idea of the insulin "biopump" to stimulate the body's production of insulin.

As you can see, diabetes is really the focus of my professional life. I study this disease in the lab every day. I care for diabetic patients at the Indianapolis Veteran's Hospital, and I teach medical students, residents, and fellows about diabetes both in the clinic and in the classroom.

The focus of my personal life, however, is my family. I am married to Chad Molina who is truly amazing and so supportive of my work.

We are college sweethearts and will celebrate our 13th anniversary in August 2010. We have two daughters, Olivia (age 4) and Cameron (age 2). These two little girls inspire me every day with their curiosity and questions. They question everything, and it is because of them that I will never stop asking, "Why"! "Why does the 13 cell fail in diabetes"... "Why can't we do a better job with our treating individuals with diabetes"? I think always maintaining this curiosity is what makes one a successful researcher!

In closing, I want to thank the Cryptic Masons for supporting research within the ICVBM. This is a great partnership, and I hope that, together, we might be able to improve the lives of those touched by diabetes.

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From the Desk of the Editor

I hope you are enjoying the contents of the magazine. If so, please tell your companions about it, and ask them to subscribe!

I want to thank Companion Alan Troland for submitting the article by Hugh McCurdy, and Dr. Carmella Evans-Molina for her Biography.

I hope some of your Companions will Submit an article for a future issue. Sent it to: Dr. Richard A. Eppler, 400 Cedar Lane, Cheshire, CT 06410-222, Email: EpplerAsc@aol.com