

THE CRYPTIC FREEMASON

THE ORIGIN OF THE CRYPTIC DEGREES

JEREMY CROSS CREATES THE CRYPTIC RITE

PART 4 - BY RICHARD A. EPPLER, EDITOR

As discussed in previous issues (Summer and Fall 2010) by 1811 the Royal Master Degree was being worked in New York City, and the Select Master Degree was being worked in Baltimore, MD. Combining them into the Cryptic Rite was the work of one man - the degree peddler Jeremy Ladd Cross.

Jeremy Ladd Cross was born June 25, 1783 in Haverhill, NH. He initially worked as a journeyman hatter until his lecturing business reached a sustaining level. He was raised a Master Mason in St. John's Lodge in Portsmouth, NH in 1807. He was an unlettered man. His knowledge even of English was very limited, his spelling and writing terrible. But he had the talent of perfection in memorization and oral presentation. This talent was soon recognized. On November 1, 1813 he received a certificate from the Grand Lecturer of New Hampshire certifying his qualifications as a lecturer in Masonic ritual. The ritual he taught was a version of the Thomas Smith Webb arrangement of the Prestonian work.

On March 15, 1815 he received the Royal Arch Degree in St. Albans, VT, thus adding the Capitular Degrees to those he could teach. Lecturers of this period like Cross acquired all the degrees they could possess, and in turn conferred them freely. Thus, one of the possible ways Cross obtained the Royal Master Degree was on August 5, 1815 when he was in Hopkinton, NH visiting the newly organized Tyrian Council of Royal Masters, which had received the degree from Benjamin Gleason, who had probably received the degree from Thomas Lowndes in New York City.

In May, 1816 Jeremy Ladd Cross went to Providence, RI to "perfect himself in the Chapter work" under the direction of Thomas Smith Webb. Brother Webb had obtained copies of Lodge and Chapter rituals from England and rearranged the work into the form most grand Jurisdictions use today. Webb then taught his work to several men, including Cross, who set out to teach the work to any Brother willing to pay for their instruction. Unlike today, this was an accepted practice in the first half of the nineteenth century and was a principal reason for the spread of Masonry across the Country as it expanded westward.

After receiving Webb's instruction, Cross went with him to the General Grand Chapter meeting in New York City, where he met Philip P. Eckel of Baltimore, MD and John Lynde of New Haven, CT. He may also have received the Royal Master Degree at this time from Thomas Lowndes. He

also fortified himself with a certificate of proficiency signed by the officers of the General Grand Chapter.

Jeremy Ladd Cross next traveled South lecturing in New Jersey and Delaware and coming to Baltimore, MD. While there he received the Select Master Degree from Philip P. Eckel, and with it the authority to communicate it to any group of nine Royal Arch Masons.



Setting out for the South and West, he left a trail of visitations and lecturing in Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Mississippi, and Louisiana. By the Spring of 1817 he was back in Baltimore, where he was now empowered by Eckel to charter Councils of Select Masters which he had informally organized, and which he might form thereafter.

Returning home for the Summer, he established Councils at New Castle, DE, Windsor, VT, and Bradford, VT. Early in the Fall he headed South again. He visited his friends in Hopkinton, NH, where he established a Council of Select Masters, which he also did at Boston, MA before visiting Thomas Webb in Providence, RI. He next had a business conference with John Lynde in New Haven, CT before heading South establishing Councils in New Jersey, Delaware, and Virginia. There he established a Council at Richmond on Christmas Day and one in Fredericksburg on St. John's Day.

When he first taught both the Royal and the Select Master degrees to a new Council is not known, except that on March 21, 1818 he entered in his diary that he had conferred both degrees on Companion Stowe in Middletown, CT.

As 1818 opened he went north to New Haven, CT, where he spent the next fifteen years. His doings there will be the subject of the next chapter in the development of the Cryptic Rite in the Spring issue.



**The Officers of the
General Grand Council of
Cryptic Masons International
wishes all its members a
Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year!**

CHARACTERISTICS OF CRYPTIC MASONRY

BY ROBERT B. MALWITZ, MIPGM, MARYLAND

I was asked to give a presentation at the General Grand Council's Northeast Regional Conference held recently in Albany, New York. The main topic of the conference was Together: Commitment, Communication, Charity. In preparing for the conference I was reminded that in all my Masonic travels it was the friendships and the sense of belonging to a greater good/whole that made Masonry fun and enjoyable. This is not to say that ritual and the other parts are not enjoyable for they are but that sense of belonging to something greater than my local bodies really is exciting.

TOGETHER: Commitment, Communication, Charity

Commitment -

As Masons we are told many times that we are only able to be successful if we act together. Before we can do this however, we must develop a sense of commitment. Without commitment the best we can achieve is to act as an unfocused group.

In his book: Basic Planning: What Every Manager Must Know, George A. Steiner quoted Thomas J. Watson, Chairman of IBM, "... the basic philosophy, spirit and drive of an organization have far more to do with its relative achievements than do technological or economic resources, organizational structure, innovation, and timing. All these things weigh heavily in success. But they are, I think, transcended by how strongly the people in the organization believe in its basic precepts and how faithfully they carry them out." Commitment then is a belief and the willingness to spend capital, time and effort in carrying out those beliefs.

Thus, commitment occurs when faith/belief intersects with action/participation. But of the two belief/faith is the motivator/driver. The strength of the belief/faith will determine the strength of the participation/action.

The basic question we must ask ourselves is: Why are we here or What purpose do we serve? In order to respond to this question we have to be able to articulate why we are important. The next time you are attending a Council Assembly ask the members: Why did you join the Council? Why is it important to you? Listen to their answers and take their responses and use them as the basis for approaching new members.

At the foundation of any response to the questions lies the implication of a belief in something. If you do not believe in something you can't commit to it. This is true in almost all aspects of our lives: our marriages, our families, our jobs and our fraternity. If you have a belief in something and are committed to it you have to participate. You have to be willing to spend your capital, your effort and your time. If you are not, then you are not really committed.

If you are willing to accept the commitment and you participate you have to become involved in some activity in supporting and furthering your commitment. In the Council this means you will have to become involved to some level with the ritual, the administration, the social aspect or become a regular attendee and be a side liner.

If you do any one or more of these activities you have shown a level of commitment. If you do not then you are just a card carrying member.

Communication -

Once you have begun to anticipate and have become active in some fashion you will soon find yourself engaged in communication. You will become involved in discussions about what is going on in your Assembly. You may be asked to assume some role in the ritual and/or the operation and maintenance of your Assembly. As you become more involved in your own Assembly you may find yourself becoming involved in your Grand Assembly. You may even find yourself in one of the Chairs.

Communication involves the interaction between expressing an idea/thought and receiving an idea/thought. It can be either oral or in writing. Communication requires an audience. When you talk to a Companion he/they are your audience. Without an audience there can be no communication.

Communication requires expectations. When you communicate you have to have something in mind. (why should a non-member become a York Rite Mason? A member of your Council?) when communicating about the ritual can you explain the lessons of the degrees? Can you explain how the Council ritual fits in with the rest of the York Rite? Can you explain our philanthropy (CMMRF). Can you explain why you joined and why the Council is important to you? Can you explain these things in such way as to be understood by your audience?

Communication requires acceptance. The audience must be willing to accept the idea or thought. Can you explain why the ritual's lessons are important? Can you explain CMMRF to someone else? If you were trying to entice someone to join -did they? Does their feedback meet your expectations?

We communicate through others. Do the General Grand officers communicate their programs well? Do the Grand and Constituent officers communicate their programs well? Do the Grand officers use their Ambassadors to help present the General Grand programs? How do the programs of General Grand fit with your programs? Do we listen to our members? Do we get them involved and encourage them to express their thoughts and ideas?

Charity -

One of the primary functions for any Masonic body is to promote its philanthropy. Every Masonic body has one or more philanthropies that they support. They address the basic question of what do we do for mankind. Do we do a good job in communicating our charity? Can you explain CMMRF? Can you offer a basic understanding of the Indiana Center for Vascular Biology and Medicine? Do you have any stories you can tell to help convey your message?

Are we committed to CMMRF? Are we willing to expend time/capital and effort in support of CMMRF?

We have taken a brief look at three elements that bind us together: commitment, communication and charity. Our ritual tells us we are bound to each other for our success.

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**2011 TRIENNIAL AUGUST 25-30, 2011
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA
BY: GEORGE C. SELLARS, DGGM**

It is now 2011, and we are running towards the Triennial and all its great events. I thought I'd give you a head start on what is on the agenda.

One thing for sure! Southern hospitality. Yes! Its fried chicken, corn bread, biscuits and gravy. Oh, did I forget to mention grits for breakfast. I've tried them all. More than once. Y'all come.

Now for the events. Here is a synopsis to help you determine your schedule:

Thursday, August 25, 2011 -

Arrival for Tour #1 tomorrow.

Friday, August 26, 2011. Tour #1, Raleigh, NC -

A day of interesting and historic value. Oakwood Cemetery where 2,800 Confederate soldiers and five generals rest in peace. The State Capital is a magnificent building rich in history. Lunch is on your own in North Hills (Mid Town), where shopping and restaurants are at your pleasure and much more.

Saturday, August 27, 2011. Tour #2, Durham, NC -

A short ride from the Hotel is Durham. The town that tobacco built. See Duke University, Chapel Hill, and the Tobacco museum. Lunch on your own in the Brightleaf Square and later other great locations like Bennett Place, where the Civil War was surrendered. If you like history and great atmosphere, then Tour #2 is for you.

Sunday, August 28, 2011. Preliminary Adjustment Day -

1. CMMRF Presentation in the AM. You and your lady need to be there to hear of its success.
2. The Flag presentations following lunch. Don't miss this event.
3. Introductions of Dignitaries.
4. The Memorial Church Service.
5. Reception of the General Grand Officers prior to the Banquet.
6. Triennial Banquet.

Monday, August 29, 2011. General Grand Council's Day -

It starts at 8:00AM, after breakfast. Don't forget the Installation of Officers in the PM.

Tuesday, August 30, 2011. General Grand Chapter Day -

It is only six months to the Triennial for General Grand Chapter and General Grand Council. Make your plans to attend. *This is your Triennial!*

**CHARACTERISTICS OF CRYPTIC MASONRY
BY ROBERT B. MALWITZ
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Psalm 133:1-2: Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments -As Ben Franklin once said if we don't hang together we will surely hang separately.

In the Royal Arch Degree the new workers are willing to do whatever is necessary without the hope of fee or reward - work for community.

In the Select Master Degree we are told a door will be opened for your reception - we will be welcomed into the community.

In the Past Master Degree we are told: Without the assistance of your brethren you cannot succeed - we need to work together to accomplish anything of import.

In the degree of Knight of York we are told one of our foremost duties is to aid our fellow creatures in their search for light - only by working together and helping each other do we find that satisfaction of charity.

While each degree/order has its own lessons the common thread is that we are bound together. How many belong to the Scottish Rite Southern Jurisdiction? To the Northern Jurisdiction? To both?

In the June 2010 issue of the Israeli Freemason MWB Shuki Shamir, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Israel says: "The meaning or our being an organization of Brotherhood is that the links between its members are not for economic or materialistic aim, nor based on religion, race, ethnicity, but on Brotherhood."

Brotherhood is defined by Webster as a bond between brothers, an association of men united in a common interest, work, creed such as a fraternity.

In the July/August Scottish Rite Journal (SJ) Grand Commander Seale summarizes Grand Commander Bill McNaughton's (NJ) perspective on Masonry when he says: Above all else we are a fraternity, a voluntary association of good men who have bound themselves together by solemn obligations."

**There are only two ways to
live your life -
One is as though nothing is a miracle.
The other is as though
everything is a miracle.**

- Albert Einstein

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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! Also, I hope some of you Companions will submit an article for a future issue. Send it to:

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