

The Cryptic Rite, known to many as the Council of Royal and Select Masters, is able to trace its early development and provides interesting if not somewhat conflicting information. Early in this century, two volumes were published that expounded upon the theories of the origin of the Rite as well as its evolution. Providing much information, derived from many noteworthy Masonic authorities, and well documented, it nevertheless presents too many pages for the casually interested Freemason.

It is my intention to present a brief excerpt that may satisfy the curious of the Royal Craft and spark a desire to look further.

~~History of the Cryptic Rite~~ by Hinman Volume II p 654

" New York- In a history of this Grand Council presented in 1861, the committees say that Henry A. Francken, the founder of the Lodge of Perfection at Albany in 1767, introduced the degrees of Royal, Select and Super Excellent Master into this country, in New York, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

In 1807, Joseph Cerneau conferred the Degree of Royal Master in New York, and established a Grand Council, under authority derived from the Grand Consistory in France, and the same year established a Grand Consistory there. The records of the Grand Council for the first three years are lost.²¹³

A charter was granted to Columbian Council No. 1, in 1810; in 1821, a Council of Select Masters in New York, founded by Eckel and Niles, united with the other, the members having been first healed. It then conferred the Super-Excellent Degree, but not very often till 1842, since which it has been regularly conferred. In a charter granted in 1824, authority was given to confer the Royal, Select and Super-Excellent Master Degrees. In 1817 a charter was issued to Benj. Gleason and others, who had formed a Council in Boston; in 1824, a charter was issued for the second Council in New York; in 1824, one was issued to John Barney and others, in Sheffield, Massachusetts; in 1825, one for a Council at Greenwich, Massachusetts, the latter had been acting as a Council for some years.

This Grand Council held all Councils and Grand Councils deriving their authority from Cross or Cushman, to be clandestine; and accordingly, in 1841, refused admission to the Most Puissant of the Grand Council of Ohio.

When the schism of the Grand Lodge of New York occurred, in 1849, it happened that almost all the members of the Grand Council were of the Phillips party. In consequence, in 1854 another Grand Council was formed by three councils, chartered by Connecticut that same year. In 1860, the two united and formed the present Grand Council of New York. The old body had published no Proceedings before the union, and we have only those of the other body and of the united body."

²¹³ All writers have assumed that the 1807 Council was the Lounds Council whose records prove it was organized in 1810. That the 1807 Council may have given way to the Lounds Council seems to have been overlooked. See chapter on Royal Degree.