



BLUE LODGE **Est. 1786**

The Entered Apprentice degree is an introduction to York Rite Freemasonry, symbolizing the ground floor of King Solomon's Temple.

Historical narrative relates that Operative masons were initiated into the work upon petition and recommendation by reputable brothers, pending approval of the membership. They were given basic instruction and sworn to secrecy as Apprentices.

Once they had proven themselves worthy, they were given the opportunity to advance through examination and performance evaluation to the level of Fellow. Fellowcraft Masons were given further instruction and further obligations, having passed to the middle chamber of the Temple.

Worthy Fellowcraft, having proven themselves worthy of further advancement, a limited number were given the opportunity to advance to the sublime position of Master. As previously, through examination and performance evaluation, they were given further instruction, further obligated, and given the Master's Word. This degree dramatizes the events perpetrated by ambitious men and the consequences following their actions. This completes the Symbolic degrees. There is no higher degree in Freemasonry, but there are further opportunities.

The Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania is the disputed oldest in the United States, and the third oldest in the world after England (est. 1717) and Ireland (est. 1725), having been

originally established as the Provincial Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania in 1731.

Two English Grand Lodges erected lodges in Pennsylvania during the 18th century, the Premier Grand Lodge of England (known as the "Moderns"), established in London in 1717, and the Ancient Grand Lodge of England (known as the "Ancients"), established in London in 1751. The first of these, the Moderns' Grand Lodge, was first to establish lodges and provincial grand lodges in the American colonies. But by 1785, the Moderns and their lodges had ceased to exist in Pennsylvania, the last of their members having been absorbed by the lodges of the Ancients.

The proven path is to start by joining a Blue Lodge where you live and becoming a Master Mason. From there, you are eligible to petition a local Chapter, Council, and, after becoming a Royal Arch Mason, a Commandery. The information provided here is an overview of what you can expect in pursuing the path of the York Rite of Freemasonry. Should you wish to know more, our contact information for the various York Rite bodies is provided below. Congratulations on wanting to learn more about York Rite Masonry!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

<https://pagrandlodge.org/>

<https://paroyalarch.org/>

<https://pagrandcouncil.org/>

<https://pagrandcommandery.org/>

YORK RITE OF FREEMASONRY **IN PENNSYLVANIA**



SYMBOLIC OR BLUE LODGE

Entered Apprentice
Fellowcraft
Master Mason

CAPITULAR MASONRY

Mark Master
Most Excellent Master
Royal Arch

CRYPTIC MASONRY

Royal Master
Select Master
Super Excellent Master

CHIVALRIC MASONRY

Illustrious Order Red Cross
Order of Malta
Order of the Temple



**HOLY ROYAL ARCH
CHAPTER**
Est. 1795

The American York Rite of Freemasonry consists of the degrees of Capitular and Cryptic Masonry along with the Chivalric Orders which are conferred on qualified Master Masons.

The Grand Holy Royal Arch Chapter of Pennsylvania was originally under the control of the Grand Lodge, being formed in 1795 and operating continuously into modern times. It became an independent body in 1824.

In the Mark Master Degree, the candidate labors in a quarry and learns how to earn his wages, how to prove his work is his own, and what the penalty for fraud was during the building of the Temple. Continuing with the Most Excellent Master degree, events surrounding the completion and dedication of the Temple are portrayed. With the Temple completed, the craft were released and permitted to travel where they could work and receive Master's wages.

The Royal Arch degree can be seen as the summit of Ancient Craft Masonry, dealing with the building of the Second Temple. The teachings of this degree are based on the Old Testament recounting of the return of the Jewish people to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity to rebuild the City and Temple. While at work on the new temple, the candidate makes important discoveries, as described in the stories of Zerubbabel and Joshua. The Royal Arch degree is seen by many as an extension of the preceding symbolic lodge degrees.



**COUNCIL OF ROYAL AND
SELECT MASTERS**
Est. 1847

Having completed the temple, it became appropriate to share the closely guarded secrets. The Royal Master Mason degree portrays a conversation immediately preceding the death of Hiram Abiff in the time before the completion of the Temple.

The Select Master Mason degree deals with the construction of a secret vault. These chosen few oversaw the deposit of the secrets of the Temple into this secret vault or crypt. Hence the title of Cryptic degrees for the Council.

The Super Excellent Master Mason degree concerns the period after the siege of Jerusalem with the destruction of the Temple when the Jewish people were taken into captivity by King Nebuchadnezzar.



**COMMANDERY OF
KNIGHTS TEMPLAR**
Est. 1797

The first Grand Encampment of Knights Templar was formed in Pennsylvania in 1797 with the purpose of protecting the innocent, helping widows and orphans, and defending the Christian religion. Principles that continue in modern times. This early Encampment failed but later attempts succeeded with the formation of a General Grand Encampment in 1816. Since that time, 60 Grand Commanderies have formed under the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar.

As a Royal Arch Mason, you are eligible to petition for the Templar Orders. The Chivalric Orders no longer strictly refer to Ancient Craft Masonry but form a link from previous degrees between the Old and New Testaments. They focus on the ideals and practices associated with the Code of Chivalry and the tenets of Christianity. The Illustrious Order of the Red Cross tells the story of Zerubbabel and his efforts to secure permission to rebuild the Second Temple.

The Order of Malta recounts the story of the Apostle Paul who was shipwrecked on the island of Malta. The candidate represents a warrior knight preparing to depart for the Crusades.

Finally, the Order of the Temple where the candidate represents a knight postulant who desires to unite with a commandery of Knights Templar during the era of the Crusades. After several trials to test his faith, courage, and humility, he is rewarded by being knighted as a Knight Templar.

