

CONSTITUTION
OF THE
GRAND COUNCIL OF ROYAL AND SELECT
MASTERS OF VIRGINIA

ADOPTED AND CONFIRMED AT RICHMOND
IN DECEMBER, 1820

PROCEEDINGS AND CONSTITUTION

At an Assembly of Delegates from the several Councils of Royal and Select Masters of the State of Virginia, held in Mason's Hall, in the City of Richmond, on Friday, the 8th day of December, A.D. 1820.

PRESENT.

John Dove,	Delegate from Council No. 1,	Richmond.
Mordecai Cooke,	Delegate from Council No. 3,	Norfolk.
John Bragg,	Delegate from Council No. 4,	Portsmouth.
James Penn,	Delegate from council No. 5,	Petersburg.
Levi L. Stevenson and David W. Patteson	Delegate from Council No. 7,	Staunton.
Jesse Cole,	Delegate from Council No. 8,	Williamsburg.
George Cabell,	Delegate from Council No. 9,	Winchester.

Companion George Cabell, was elected Chairman, and Companion John Dove, Clerk.

The following preamble and Resolution, was then submitted and unanimously adopted:

Whereas there are now established in the State of Virginia, Nine Councils of Royal and Select Masters, which are without general head, and whereas it is expedient and necessary that there should be some authentic source from whence to derive Charters and Privileges, heretofore derived from warrants obtained through the intervention of individuals licensed by the Grand Puissants of Maryland and Connecticut:

THEREFORE RESOLVED, That a Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters be established in the State of Virginia; and that a Committee of five Companions be appointed to draft a Constitution and Code of By-Laws for the Government of the same, and the several Subordinate Councils under its jurisdiction, and report to this Assembly, at 4 o'clock to-morrow evening; whereupon, Companions David W. Patteson, James Penn, Levi L. Stevenson, John Bragg and Mordecai Cooke, were appointed to perform that duty.

RESOLVED, That this Assembly do now adjourn until 4 o'clock to-morrow evening, to meet at Companion Cabell's office.

George Cabell, Chairman

John Dove, Clerk.

At an adjourned Assembly of Delegates from the several Councils in the State of Virginia, continued and held at Companion Cabell's office, on Saturday, the 9th day of December, A.D. 1820.

PRESENT

John Dove,
Robert Archer,
Mordecai Cooke,
George Cabell,
James Penn,
Levi L. Stevenson,
David W. Patteson

Delegate from No. 1
Delegate from No. 3
Delegate from No. 4
Delegate from No. 5
Delegate from No. 6
Delegate from No. 7
Delegate from No. 9

Companion George Cabell, was called to the Chair, John Dove, appointed Clerk.

The Companions appointed to draft a Constitution and Code of By-Laws, for the Government of the Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of the State of Virginia, then offered the following Code; which was, after mature deliberation, solemnly adopted and ordered to be Recorded.

CONSTITUTION
OF THE
GRAND COUNCIL
OF
ROYAL AND SELECT MASTERS OF VIRGINIA

Article I

The Grand Council of the State of Virginia, shall be governed by a Thrice Illustrious Grand Master, a Thrice Illustrious Deputy Grand Master, a Grand Principal Conductor, Grand Captain of the Guards, Grand Treasurer, Grand Recorder, Grand Chaplain and Grand Tyler; all of which Officers shall be chosen annually, by ballot, at the Stated Meetings of the Grand Council.

Article II

The Grand Officers, for the time being, the Past Grand Officers of the three first grades of the Grand Council, the three presiding Officers of each Subordinate Council under the jurisdiction of this Grand Council, or their legally authorised proxies, and all past Thrice Illustrious Masters of the same, shall be members of the Grand Council.

Article III

A Grand Assembly of the Members of the Grand Council, shall be holden annually on the first Monday in December, at Richmond; and the Thrice Illustrious Grand Master, for the time being, may, at any time, order a Special Assembly, to be holden at such place as he shall think proper to appoint, giving the Members at least one month's notice.

Article IV

The Grand Council shall have power to constitute new Councils, grant Charters and dispensations under the sign manual of the Thrice Illustrious Grand Master, Thrice Illustrious Deputy Grand Master and Grand Principal Conductor; counterersigned by the Grand Recorder; who shall affix the Seal of the Grand Council to such Charter or Dispensation.

Article V

The several Councils under the jurisdiction of this Grand Council, shall be numbered according to the dates of their respective Charters; and each Council that shall be hereafter constituted by this Grand Council, shall pay into the Grand Treasury, for the use of the Grand Council, the sum of forty dollars, and a fee of five dollars to the Grand Recorder, before receiving their Charter.

Article VI

The Grand Council shall superintend the general police of the respective Councils under their jurisdiction and shall order and direct the particular and uniform mode of exaltation, and shall hear and determine on all appeals of Companions, regularly taken from the decisions of any Council, and shall affirm or reverse such decision, in whole or in part, as they shall deem meet and proper.

Article VII

It shall be incumbent on the Thrice Illustrious Grand Master, Thrice Illustrious Deputy Grand Master, and Grand Principal Conductor, severally, to improve themselves in the Sublime Arts and Work of Royal and Select Masters degrees of Masonry; and to make themselves Masters of the several Masonic Lectures and Ancient Charges; whose right and duty it shall be, as often as opportunity presents, to visit, and preside in the several Subordinate Councils, and give such Lectures and instructions as will tend to the most proper and uniform mode of working, always adhering to the ancient land-marks of the order.

Article VIII

Balloting in Grand Council, shall in all cases be by Councils, and by the Officers of the Grand Council and Past Officers of the same, and of Subordinate Councils, in the following manner to wit: --

The Thrice Illustrious Grand Master, Thrice Illustrious Deputy Grand Master, and Principal Conductor, for the time being, collectively, one vote; all the other Grand Officers, collectively, one vote; all Past Grand Officers of the three first grades, collectively, one vote; and all Past Thrice Illustrious Masters of Subordinate Councils, collectively, one vote; and each Council in the Assembly, one vote; and any Member representing more than one Council, shall be entitled to a vote for each Council he may represent.

Article IX

No new Charter for a Council of Select Masters, shall be granted, except upon the petition of nine regular Royal and Select Master Masons; which petition shall be accompanied by a certificate from the Council nearest to the place where the new Council is intended to be opened, vouching for the moral characters and Masonic abilities of the petitioners, and recommending to the Grand Council to grant their prayer.

Article X

For defraying the necessary expenses of the Grand Council, each Council under its jurisdiction, shall pay at the rate of fifty cents for each and every Member: PROVIDED, That no Council shall pay less than five or more than ten dollars annually.

Article XI

The Accounts of the Grand Treasurer shall be audited annually, and report made to the Grand Council of the state of the funds, at each Stated Grand Assembly.

Article XII

It shall be the duty of the Grand Recorder to procure a Record Book for the use of the Grand Council, in which he shall enter all By-Laws, Decisions, and Decrees of the Grand Council, now on file, and those hereafter to be passed; and shall cause all votes and proceedings of the Grand Council to be printed annually, as soon after the close of the Grand Assembly as convenient; and ten copies thereof transmitted to each Council under this jurisdiction, unless otherwise directed by the Grand Council.

Article XIII

The aforesaid Book of Records shall, at all Assemblies of the Grand Council, be on the table, for the use and inspection of the Officers and Members of said Grand Assembly.

Article XIV

The Grand Council shall be competent, on concurrence of three-fourths of its Members present, at any time hereafter, to revise, amend and alter this Constitution, and make, alter and amend such laws and regulations as may be deemed necessary by

them, for the better government of their own body, or that of the Subordinate Councils: PROVIDED ALWAYS, That such proposed laws, alterations, or amendments, shall be handed up in writing, on the first or second night of the Assembly, and if approved, to be submitted to the Grand Committee for their deliberation and sanction, on the ensuing day.

Article XV

It shall be a standing rule of this Grand Council, that any person elected to the office of Thrice Illustrious Grand Master, must be regularly invested with the badges of his office, and Council either on the same day, or on that succeeding his election, except in the case of the re-election of a Thrice Illustrious Grand Master already invested, which said Thrice Illustrious Grand Master, whether present or not, may be continued in office for one other term only, and shall, after such re-election, be ineligible for the two next succeeding years.

Article XVI

When any person not present, and who cannot attend the Grand Council during its sitting, shall be elected to fill any office in the Grand Council, (The Thrice Illustrious Grand Master excepted) a certificate of his election shall be forwarded him by the Grand Recorder, and if he shall accept the said appointment, he shall endorse thereon his acceptance, and as soon as possible thereafter, qualify thereto before any of the three first Grand Officers, and return the said certificate with the qualification endorsed thereon, to the said Grand Recorder, to be by him recorded. And the said Officer so elected and qualified, shall be as fully invested with all the power and authority attached to his office, as if the investure had been done in open Council.

Article XVII

The Grand Recorder shall be allowed a fee of three dollars for every DIPLOMA he may issue to Companions who may be Members of, or may have been wxalted in this Grand Council.

OF SUBORDINATE COUNCILS

Article I

All legally constituted assemblies of Royal and Select Master Masons, shall be called Councils, and be governed by, and consist of, a Thrice Illustrious Master, Thrice Illustrious Deputy Master, Principal Conductor of the Work, Captain of the Guards, Recorder, Treasurer, chaplain, and Tyler; and as many Members as may be found convenient for working to advantage: And every Council thus constituted, ought to assemble at least once in every three months.

Article II

Every Council throughout this jurisdiction, shall have a

Charter from the Grand Council; and no Council shall be deemed legal, without such Charter: and all Masonic communications, either public or private, are hereby interdicted and forbidden between any Council under this jurisdiction, or any Member of either of them, and any Council that may be so illegally formed, opened, or holden, or any or either of their Members, or any person exalted in such illegal Council.

Article III

In all cases of the absence of any Officer from any Council, holden by virtue of this Constitution, the Officer next in rank shall succeed his superior, unless through courtesy, said Officer should decline in favour of a Past superior Officer present. And in case of the absence of all the Officers from any legal Assembly of any Council aforesaid, the Members present, according to seniority and ability, shall fill the several offices.

Article IV

In any Council, holden by virtue of this Constitution, all questions shall be determined by a majority of votes, (except as to the admission of Members and Candidates) and in case the votes should at any time be equally divided, the presiding Officer shall give the casting vote.

Article V

No Council shall be removed without the knowledge of the Thrice Illustrious Master, nor any motion made for that purpose in his absence; but if the Thrice Illustrious Master be present, and a motion is made and seconded for removing the Council to some more convenient place (within the limits prescribed by their Charter) he shall, forthwith, cause notifications to be issued to all the Members informing them of the motion for removal, and of the time and place when the question is to be determined; which notice shall be issued at least ten days previous to the appointed meetings. But if the Thrice Illustrious Master should (without just cause) absent himself from the Council, whereby no motion can be made, and the same shall so appear to two-thirds of the whole Members of the Council, or (after motion duly made and seconded as aforesaid), the Officer next in rank, who may be present at the next regular meeting, following, (upon motion made and seconded for that purpose) may in like manner, issue the said notices, and do and act in all things necessary, in the same manner as if the Thrice Illustrious Master was present.

Article VI

The Thrice Illustrious Master of every Council has it in special charge, and it is hereby his bounden duty, as appertaining to his office and dignity, to see that the By-Laws of His Council, as well as the Constitution and General regulations of the Grand Council, be duly observed; that all the other officers of his Council perform the duties of their

respective offices faithfully, and are examples of diligence and industry, to their Companions; that true and exact records be kept of all the proceedings of the Council by the Recorder; that the Treasurer keep and render exact and just accounts of all monies belonging to the Council; that regular returns be made by the Recorder, annually to the Grand Council of all the Members belonging to the Council, and of the deaths and removals that may happen between the annual meetings of the Grand Council; and to the Grand Recorder of all suspensions, expulsions and rejections, as they severally occur; and that the annual dues to the Grand Council be punctually paid. He has the right and authority of calling his Council at pleasure, upon any emergency or occurrence, which in his judgement may require their meetings, and he is to fill the Chair when present. It is likewise his duty, and the duty of the Thrice Illustrious Deputy Master and Principal Conductor, to attend in person or by proxy, all assemblies of the Grand Council, whether stated or thereunto summoned by the Grand Recorder.

Article VII

Every Council within the jurisdiction of this Grand Council, shall demand and receive for each exaltation, (except in the exaltation of a clergyman, who may be exalted gratis) not less than ten dollars.

Article VIII

The several Councils under this jurisdiction shall be presented in each Assembly of the Grand Council, whether stated or occasional, by one or more of the three first presiding officers of the respective Councils, or their regular proxies, and shall make their returns to the Grand Council, according to the By-Laws thereof, under a penalty, for neglect so to do, (at the direction of the Grand Council) of not less than ten dollars.

Article IX

The respective Councils under this Jurisdiction, shall make out and transmit to the Grand Council, annually, at their Convocation in December, the names of their three presiding Officers, together with a list of the number and names of their other officers and members and a report of all Removals, Suspensions, Rejections, Expulsions and Deaths; and should any Council refuse or neglect so to do, or omit paying their dues to the Grand Council for two years successively, their Charter shall be suspended, by notice from the Thrice Illustrious Grand Master, signed by the Grand Recorder, until the next Succeeding Grand Annual Assembly; when without sufficient excuse for such refusal or neglect, (to be judged so by the Grand Council,) and returns being made, and dues paid up, the Charter of such Council shall be forfeited. And in case any Council shall desire to return its Charter, the same mode shall be pursued, as is prescribed for receiving Charters from the Lodges under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge Virginia, and as now in force.

Article X

No applicant, who may be rejected in any Council under this jurisdiction, shall again be eligible to petition that, or any other Council within said jurisdiction in the space of twelve months.

The Assembly in Grand Council, then proceeded to the election of Officers for the ensuing twelve months, whereupon, the following Companions were duly elected:

M.E. Levi L. Stevenson,	Thrice Illustrious Grand Master
M.E. John Dove,	Thrice Illustrious Deputy Grand Master
M.E. Robert Archer,	Grand Principal Conductor
Comp. John Bragg,	Grand Captain of the Guards
David W. Patteson,	Grand Treasurer
George Cabell,	Grand Recorder
Rev. eorge Reed,	Grand Chaplain
George Fletcher,	Grand Tyler

On motion, RESOLVED, That each Council under the jurisdiction of this Grand Council, do forthwith, contribute the sum of two dollars, for the purpose of defraying the necessary expenses incurred by this Grand Assembly.

On motion, RESOLVED, That each Council in this State shall before the Assembly of the Grand Council in December, A.D. 1821 deposit with the Grand recorder, their present Charters or Warrants of Dispensation, and thereupon receive from this Grand Council new Charters, which shall be numbered according to the priority of the dates of their present Charters or Warrants. The new Charters shall be granted to the existing Councils free from expense, except the expense of engrossing, which shall be defrayed by the respective Councils.

On motion, RESOLVED, That the Grand Recorder make out and have published, one hundred copied of the proceedings if this Assembly, and draw upon the Treasurer for the amount necessary to defray the disbursement.

ORDERED, That the Grand Recorder, transmit to each Subordinate Council under this jurisdiction, five copies of the above proceedings.

(Signed)

Teste,
John Dove, Clerk

George Cabell
Chairman

NOTE: There are several obvious errors in the record as printed above. For example, on page forty four it is noted that Mordecai Cooke represented Norfolk Council No. 3, John Bragg, Portsmouth Council No. 4, and James Penn, Petersburg Council No. 5 at the organization meeting of the Grand Council of Virginia. Actually Mordecai Cooke represented Portsmouth Council No. 4, John Bragg represented Petersburg Council No. 5, and James Penn represented Washington Council No. 6 (Lynchburg) on that occasion.