

## Rehabilitation of the Grand Council of Texas

The Royal and Select Master's Degree was brought to America by the Scottish Rite as an honorary degree.

Jeremy L. Cross who was the Grand Lecturer for the General Grand Chapter of the Royal Arch Masons and many of the early Grand Lodges in America, being a highly regarded Mason of his day, was honored by the Scottish Rite Supreme Council with the degree. Upon receiving the degree, he recognized the relationship of the Royal and Select Master's Degree to the Chapter degrees and how it explained the preservation and eventual recovery of the lost word. He then requested and received permission from the Scottish Rite Supreme Council to confer the Royal and Select Master's Degree in Chapters around America. In 1820, Cross wrote a book called "Masonic Chart" with all Masonic Degrees that are used today to explain the symbols of the degrees of the York Rite.

On the 23rd day of June in 1856, representatives from four councils, Houston, Austin, Galveston and Coleman (which was located at Marshall), together with two Companions from out of state councils met for the purpose of forming the Grand Council of Texas. A committee was formed to draw up a Constitution, to be presented on the following day and the session then ended. On the following day the Constitution was presented and adopted, after which the first Grand Officers were elected and installed. At the evening session on the second day, petitions were received and dispensations granted for two new councils at Seguin and Gonzales. The Grand Master appointed a committee on Foreign Correspondence and the first meeting of the Grand Council was then adjourned.

The Grand Council continued to grow and prosper until 1861, when many of the Companions went away to fight in the Civil War. In 1863, due to the small number of members present and the waning interest in the Grand Council in light of the War, a resolution was presented to dissolve the Grand Council. This was then referred to the subordinate councils for a report and action the following year.

In 1864, with only 14 members in attendance, it was voted to surrender the Rituals and properties of the Grand Council of Texas to the Grand Chapter of Texas for the purpose of preserving and safeguarding the orders. The degrees were to be conferred in Councils, which would be made appendant to local Chapters.

The rehabilitation of the Grand Council occurred on the third day of December in 1907 by action of the Grand Chapter of Texas. Resolutions were submitted and passed authorizing the Grand High Priest to declare the Grand Council rehabilitated, and laying out the steps to make said rehabilitation happen.

As all assets of the Grand Council had been turned over to the Grand Chapter in 1864, it was decided that the Grand Chapter was to prepare a seal, ledger, appropriate stationary and charters at the Grand Chapter's expense to be presented to the Grand Council. For a like reason, it was also decided that the subordinate chapters were to furnish the local Councils with a seal, ledger and minute book at the local Chapter's expense.

Jurisdiction over all local Councils was to be transferred to the Grand Council upon the passing of certain resolutions within the Grand Council that were designed to maintain and strengthen the ties between the local Chapters and the local Councils, as well as cementing the relationship between the two Grand Bodies.

A convention of Royal and Select Masters was declared opened by John L. Terrell, Grand High Priest. Robert M. Elgin, the Grand Master of the Grand Council when it ceased labor in 1864, was still alive and active but was unable to attend due to illness. He sent a letter of proxy asking that Sam P. Cochran be authorized to preside on his behalf.

Grand Officers were then elected and appointed as appropriate, and the new Grand Officers were then installed. The Grand Council then officially accepted the terms put forth by the Grand Chapter and a Committee on Work was then elected to examine and recommend such changes in the ritualistic work, as they may deem appropriate. A committee was also appointed to revise the Constitution and Laws as appropriate and report back to the Convention at its earliest convenience. Both committees reported back on the following day and the appropriate ritualistic form as well as a new Constitution was each adopted.

A resolution was then offered and passed which accepted jurisdiction over the degree of Super Excellent Master whose authority had been received from the Grand Lodge of Kentucky.

The Grand Officers of the Grand Council were then authorized to take the appropriate steps to incorporate the Grand Council under the laws of the State of Texas, and a resolution was passed authorizing each subordinate Council to draw up appropriate by-laws.

Two hundred and fifteen Councils were reinstated and ten new Councils were then granted charters making a total of two hundred and twenty-five Councils. The new Councils were as follows:

- Cushing Council at Cushing, Texas
- Canyon Council at Canyon, Texas
- Anson Council at Anson, Texas
- Marble Falls Council at Marble Falls, Texas
- Richmond Council at Richmond, Texas
- Rosebud Council at Rosebud, Texas
- Livingston Council at Livingston, Texas
- Kennedy Council at Kennedy, Texas
- Decatur Council at Decatur, Texas
- Somerville Council at Somerville, Texas

The Grand Master then appointed several standing committees. No further business appearing, the Grand Council was then closed.