Historical Sketch

Of
Capitular Masonry in Delaware from its Introduction in 1818 to the
Forming of the Present Grand Chapter in 1869

By Stuart J. Horn, P.G.H.P.

Wilmington, Delaware, January 16, 1818

As the first Temple was completely destroyed and the sacred treasures lost for
over four hundred years, so the Temple of Royal Arch Masonry was destroyed and its
history lost for many years after its introduction in this State.

After diligent search in about the Temple and among the Masonic archives and
records your committee has brought to light some facts concerning the early history of
Capitular Masonry in Delaware, which may prove interesting.

The first record we find a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons in this state is that given
in the minutes of Washington Royal Arch Chapter of Super Excellent Royal Arch
Masons held on the 24th day of January A.D. 1806 A.L. 5809 in the Borough of
Wilmington under the authority of a warrant from the Grand Lodge of Delaware for
holding a Lodge in the said borough under the name and title of Washington Lodge No.
1, convened by special agreement. There were present the following named Companions:
Charles Mareighny of New York; John Sellars, Wilmington; George Monroe, Edinburg;
James Jefferis, Belfast; Evan Thomas, Santa Cruz; Edwin Roche, Virginia.

"Having conferred, examined and approved each other, and found to agree,
proceeded to open, and did open the Royal Arch Chapter with due form and solemnity."

After the election of officers, David Robinette having applied in due form to be
admitted as a Companion in the Royal Arch Chapter and being approved of, was after
due examination and approbation, regularly admitted and elevated to the Super Excellent
degree of a Royal Arch Mason and Companion of this Chapter. Companion Robinette
was therefore the first man to receive the Royal Arch degree in this State of whom we
have any record.

It is probable this meeting was held in the City Hall of the Borough of
Wilmington, as the minutes show that the subsequent meetings of the Chapter were held
there. This building was erected in 1789 and is located on Market Street between Fifth
and Sixth Streets, and until two years ago was the City Hall.
In 1817 there were seven Chapters of Royal Arch Masons in Delaware, namely: Hope Chapter, No. 4, at Laurel, Union Chapter, No. 7 at Dover, Temple Chapter No. 2 at Milford, Washington Chapter No. 1 at Wilmington, Hiram Chapter No. 6 at Wilmington, Washington Chapter No. 5 at Cantwell’s Bridge, and Chapter No. 2 at New Castle. On the 24th day of June in that year 1817, a convention of delegates from these seven Chapters of Holy Royal Arch Masons assembled in the Town Hall in the Borough of Wilmington, and after appointing Companion Willard Hall Chairman and Companion J. Gordon Brinckle as Secretary, proceeded to establish a Grand Holy Royal Arch Chapter in the State of Delaware. This Grand Chapter continued in existence with varying degrees of success until about the year 1859.

In the year 1826 a Dispensation was granted by the Grand Chapter of Delaware to form a Chapter to be known as Lafayette Chapter, and pursuant to a notice issued by Companion Willard Hall, a meeting of the Companions who had previously petitioned the Most Excellent Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter of Delaware for a dispensation to work as Royal Arch Masons, was held at the Masons Hall on the evening of 31st of August 1826. When Companion Willard Hall announced to the Companions assembled, that the Most Excellent Grand High Priest had granted their petition, and that he had then and there the dispensation empowering them to work as Royal Arch Masons, constituting himself Most Excellent High Priest, Companion Richard Clement, King and Companion N.G. Williams, Scribe. Whereupon a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons was opened in solemn form. There were present:

Willard Hall, M.E.H.P.
Richard Clement, King
N.G. Williams, Scribe
J.D. Wood, Captain of the Host
W. Boyd, Royal Arch Captain
Lewis Ashton, Principal Sojourner
Elisha Huxley, Master of the First Veil
R. Williaton, Master of the Second Veil
W. Baldwin, Master of the Third Veil
Wm. Clark, Recorder
Victor DuPont, Treasurer
Joseph Day, Tyler
John Hedge, Visitor

At the annual Communication of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Delaware held at Dover, January 1832, Washington Chapter No. 1 and Lafayette Chapter No. 6 made application for permission to consolidate the two Chapters under the name of Washington and Lafayette Chapter No. 1, which application was granted.
In the book Masonic Potpourri by Charles E. Green published in 1962 we find the following outline of the birth of Capitular Masonry in Delaware. Which confirms and expands upon the history given in the 1918 centennial history of the introduction of organized Capitular Masonry in Delaware.

**Grand Holy Royal Arch Chapter of Delaware**

From the introduction of Capitular Masonry in Delaware on August 6, 1789 in Lodge No. 14 (Wilmington) under the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, it spread into the other Blue Lodges in the State. This adoption under the sanction and protection of the various lodges was a slow process. However, with the formation of the Grand Lodge of Delaware on June 6, 1806 and the granting of new charters, we find the work being conferred in every active Lodge. These Chapters were appendages of the Blue Lodges and in nearly every instance; they were named and numbered after the Mother Lodge.

Ten years later the need of a Grand Chapter was evident. The Grand Lodge of Delaware held its Communication on June 24, 1817. During the off hours, a Convention of delegates from the different Chapters took steps toward establishing a Grand Holy Royal Arch Chapter of Delaware within the State of Delaware. The delegates assembling in the Old Town Hall at Sixth and Market Streets, Wilmington were:

- Washington Chapter No. 1, Wilmington
- Benjamin H. Springer, John Springer, James McKean
- Chapter No. 2, New Castle
- George Read, Jr., John Crow
- Temple Chapter No. 2, Milford
- James Millechop, John Brinckloe, Joseph G. Oliver
- Hope Chapter No. 4, Laurel
- James Derrickson
- Washington Chapter No. 5, Cantwell’s Bridge
- Leonard Vandegrift, Thomas Belville, William B. Cochran
- Union Chapter No. 7, Dover
- Willard Hall, Arnold Naudain, J. Gordon Brinckle

Willard Hall presided over the convention with J. Gordon Brinckle as Secretary. A committee was appointed by resolution “to take into consideration the propriety and expediency of establishing a Grand Holy Royal Arch Chapter with the State of Delaware.” The convention was adjourned until 9 p.m. That evening Hiram Chapter No. 6, Bucks Tavern, represented by William Brown and William Boyd, was also present. The Committee appointed at the morning session reported favorably on the establishment of a Grand Chapter and recommended the appointment of a committee to draft a constitution. The Convention adjourned to meet in Dover January 19, 1818.
When the Convention met in Dover on January 19th, the following representatives were present.

Washington Chapter No. 1
Benjamin H. Springer
Temple Chapter No. 2
James Millechop, Joseph G. Oliver, John Brinckloe
Hope Chapter No. 4
James Derrickson
Washington Chapter No. 5
Thomas Belville
Hiram Chapter No. 6
William Boyd
Union Chapter No. 7
J. Gordon Brinckle, Arthur Johns, Edward Fisher

M.W. Willard Hall, Grand Master of Delaware and chairman of the Convention, being absent, Companion James Millechop was called to the chair.

A draft of a Constitution for the government of the Grand Chapter was read, amended, and adopted. Article VI directed “the Grand High Priest, Deputy Grand High Priest, Grand King, and Grand Scribe to proceed forthwith after their election, to form an union with the General Grand Chapter of the United States.” The proceedings contain no records of any attempt to bring about this union. Capitular Masonry in Delaware has never had a large sum of money and we assume that this directive was not undertaken because of a lack of funds.

After the adoption of the Constitution, the Convention adjourned sine die and the Grand Chapter of the State of Delaware was opened in due form with Companion J. Gordon Brinckle presiding. They proceeded to ballot for officers.

Archibald Hamilton was elected Most Excellent Grand High Priest
James Millechop, M.E. Deputy Grand High Priest
James Derrickson, M.E. Grand King
George Read, Jr., M.E. Grand Scribe
Leonard Vandegrift, E. Grand Treasurer
J. Gordon Brinckle, E. Grand Secretary

The M.E. Grand High Priest later made the following appointments:

Henry R. Judah, Grand Royal Arch Chaplain
Joseph G. Oliver, Grand Captain of the Host
Thomas Belville, Grand Royal Arch Captain
Joseph Mountain, Grand Royal Arch Marshal
Alexander McClintop, Grand Pursuivant
Abel Harris, Grand Janitor
ARCHIBALD HAMILTON

Archibald Hamilton, our first Grand High Priest, was Worshipful Master of Temple Lodge No. 11 at the time of election, a distinguished lawyer and a prominent citizen of Wilmington.

He was raised in Lodge No. 14 (Wilmington) under the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, on March 19, 1806 and was Charter Junior Warden of Washington Lodge No. 1 when they received their charter on June 7, 1806. He was elected Worshipful Master in December 1807, June 1808, and December 1808. Hamilton demitted to become Charter Worshipful Master of Temple Lodge No. 11, Wilmington as shown on their charter dated January 20, 1817. He was elected Junior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of Delaware in 1818; Senior Grand Warden in 1819 and 1820; Deputy Grand Master in 1821, 1822, and 1823 and Grand Master on June 27, 1829.

Hamilton was apparently a man of fiery nature with a sense of humor. In the proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Delaware there is an entry about a protest. Instead of moving that the protest be laid on the table, Hamilton made a motion that “the said protest be thrown under the table.” He was an earnest advocate of the removal of the County seat from New Castle to Wilmington. This stand created political enemies. There is a caricature of him, representing a man with a courthouse on his back. It was distributed throughout the county during one of the campaigns in which this subject was an issue.

Hamilton was admitted to the bar of New Castle County in 1809, elected State Representative in 1826 and 1836-37; and State Senator in 1834-35.

He died October 4, 1841 at the age of 59 and was buried in Presbyterian Cemetery, Tenth and Market Streets, Wilmington.

JAMES MILLECHOP

Our first Deputy Grand High Priest was a very active Mason from Sussex County and Justice of the Peace. He was a Charter Junior Warden of Temple Lodge No. 9, Milford, warranted January 16, 1815. He served as Worshipful Master of his Lodge five times and was elected Junior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of Delaware in 1817, Senior Grand Warden in 1818. He served as Deputy Grand High Priest during 1818, 1819, and 1820. The minutes of the Grand Chapter for 1821 are incomplete, however, there is an indication that James Millechop was elected Grand High Priest that year.
DR. JAMES DERRICKSON

Dr. James Derrickson, first Grand King, was a charter member of Lodge No. 31 at Laurel, Delaware, under the Grand Lodge of Maryland. He practiced medicine throughout Sussex County and was the owner of considerable tracts of land. He was Worshipful Master of Hope Lodge No. 4, Laurel in 1813, 1814, and 1815; elected Junior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of Delaware in 1814, 1815, and 1816; Senior Grand Warden, 1817; Deputy Grand Master 1818, 1819, 1820; Grand Master 1821, 1822, and 1823. Companion Derrickson was elected Grand High Priest in 1822 and 1823.

GEORGE READ, JR.

George Read, Jr., first Grand Scribe, was the son of George Read, the Signer of the Declaration of Independence for Delaware. He was United States District Attorney of Delaware for 30 years, and Worshipful Master of St. John’s Lodge No. 2 under the Grand Lodge of Delaware in 1814 and 1818. George Read, Jr. was held in high regard for his oratory ability.

WILLARD HALL

Willard Hall, who presided over the Convention that brought into existence our first Grand Chapter, was elected Grand Master of the Grand Lodge the following day, June 27, 1817. His name is foremost among the outstanding citizens of Delaware. Companion Hall was member of Union Lodge No. 7, Dover; Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Delaware, 1817 and 1818; Deputy Grand High Priest, 1822 and 1823 and Grand High Priest, 1824.

He is generally known as the “Father of our State School System.” He was Secretary of State for Delaware for two terms and United States Congressman from Delaware 1816-1820. In 1823, President Monroe appointed him Judge of the Federal Court, District of Delaware. He held this esteemed office until his retirement in 1872- a period of 48 years.

In such manner, Companions, and by such distinguished men and Masons, was the first Grand Holy Royal Arch Chapter of Delaware instituted. This early Grand Chapter represents the real beginning of Capitular Masonry in Delaware. The high caliber of the men who were its founders demonstrates that advances in Royal Arch Masonry are dependent upon the zeal, enthusiasm, and intelligence of those comprising its membership.
With the formation of the Grand Holy Royal Arch Chapter of Delaware on June 24, 1817, Capitular Masonry in our State began to develop. The minutes of the Grand Communications, as they were then called, are complete from 1817 to 1827. In those ten years there was a steady growth. Then in 1826, we come to the Morgan affair with its vicious embellishments. The Grand Chapter of Holy Royal Arch Masons of Delaware received a blow from which it never fully recovered. Chapters went out of existence, became dormant or continued with intermittent meetings.

In the minutes for January 14, 1822, there is listed among the subordinate chapters: Hiram Chapter No. ___, represented by Benjamin H. Springer, High Priest. Since Springer was a member of Washington Chapter No. 1 and had withdrawn and since he was Charter Junior Warden of Temple Lodge No. 11, we feel sure that this was a chapter coming out of the second Wilmington Lodge, Temple No. 11. On January 16, 1826, a charter was granted to Hiram Chapter No. 6 of Wilmington. This evidently was not picked up for at the Grand Communication on January 16, 1827, a charter was granted to Lafayette Chapter of Wilmington and the fee paid for the charter of Hiram Chapter was considered as full compensation for the sum required for Lafayette Chapter. You will recall that Lafayette was made a member of the Grand Lodge of Delaware on July 25, 1825 and signed his name on the charter of Lafayette Lodge No. 14, constituted January 17, 1825 and named in his honor. It was logical that a Chapter would soon bear his honored name.

Also at this Grand Communication, the removal of Union Chapter from Dover to Smyrna was granted, apparently under the name of Harmony Chapter. In 1826, Hope Chapter No. 4 removed from Laurel to Georgetown and in January 1832, Washington Chapter No. 1 and Lafayette Chapter No. 6 were consolidated under the name of Washington and Lafayette Chapter No. 1. The Morgan episode was showing its devastating effects.

In 1826, there were seven Chapters in Delaware with a membership of approximately 150. The total Delaware Blue Lodge membership was only 365. One can readily perceive the progress that had been accomplished in ten years. However, with the effects of the Morgan affair, Capitular Masonry in Delaware became dormant. The Grand Chapter attempted to keep the fires alive by Grand Communications in 1832 and 1833 but to no avail. It was 1848 before Dr. James P. Lofland, the Grand High Priest of 1825-27, was able to take the steps to revive the Grand Holy Royal Arch Chapter of Delaware. Our good and faithful Companion was unsuccessful for several reasons. There was apparently a general lack of interest resulting from the Panic of 1837 and the Mexican War of 1846-47. There were few Grand Chapter meetings for the years 1851 to 1868. Here the Civil War and Grand High Priest George W. Chaytor enter into the picture and knell the death of the Grand Holy Royal Arch Chapter of Delaware, and the birth of the present Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Delaware.