

GRAND COMMANDERY OF WYOMING
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Sir Knights all: March is a month that leads us to believe that Spring is right around the corner. However, I am of the opinion that the groundhog and Lander Lil, Possum Pete and all of the other prognosticators have duped us. Lately Old Man Winter has had his grips on Wyoming. I hope that the weather has not kept you from your Masonic meetings. It is most important that we attend our Blue Lodge and York Rite meetings. It is there that we see old Masonic friends, make new ones and encourage each other to keep up the fight. Our numbers have dwindled, but we have a core of good men in every lodge and Commandery in the state. We must seek out qualified men and let them know that the light of Masonry is available to all good men who seek it. They just have to ask. Percentage wise, Wyoming has a high number of men who are York Rite Masons. I have observed that most of the active members of the Blue Lodges are York Rite Masons. Take pride in what you do and practice out of the lodge those great moral tenets which are inculcated within it. I ran into a young man tonight who was made a Knight Templar about two years ago and had yet to attend a meeting. He was not sure when they met. I realize that circumstances may have had a part in this, but someone signed his petition and someone needs to follow up on his welfare. He needs to take some responsibility as well.

We have one York Rite Conferral of Chapter and Council this month on March 5th in Sheridan. Then on March 19th the Chivalric Orders will be conferred. I can attest to the high quality of the work done there from Companions and Sir Knights around the area, as I have personally witnessed it. If you have a candidate, this is your chance. Please consider going to observe if you can. I know that I always seem to learn a little something new each time that I see the work done.

We have too many Commanderies that are struggling to keep going. I ask that you assist one another in any way that you can. If you don't have a quorum, practice a part of the ritual with what you have. A good one that takes only a few Sir Knights is the presentation of the colors. It is fun to do and when done well it looks really sharp.

I was doing some reading about the history of our Order. I found some interesting things. Some believe that our Order was founded many, many years ago. A popular legend has it that we have some connection to the Order of Malta which was dissolved in 1798 or to the Order of the Temple which ceased to exist in 1313. However, this is not necessarily true. A more realistic and truer theory is to credit the ritual makers of the eighteenth century with the origins of Masonic Templary. For four long centuries there was silence along the Templar front. In 1717 we saw the start of the Grand Lodge of England when four lodges united in doing so. Up until this time there were various and sundry ritualistic degrees conferred, some quite different from others but there was no unifying body to oversee any of this. Among the Scottish sources there is evidence of one Chevalier Ramsay, a Mason and gentleman who was a tutor to the exiled Charles Edward, the second pretender to the throne. Ramsay was credited with creating a sixth degree of Masonry designated Knight of the Temple, a loosely based military order. During the middle eighteenth century this degree was conferred in Great Britain and was connected to Craft Masonry of the period. In about 1780, the Duke of Athol who was also Grand Master of Scotland of the Ancients introduced the Templar Degree to be followed after the Royal Arch. This was the system in Wyoming up until the mid- twentieth century when the Council degrees were also required to be completed before one could become a Knight Templar. The records of the Grand Lodge of England in June 1780 show that the degrees of Masonry were Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, Master Mason, Royal Arch and Knight Templar all being conferred in the lodges. The first known conferring of the Order of the Templar in the United States was in Boston on August 28th, 1769 where Brother William Davis was made a Templar following the degrees of the Royal Arch. The influence of British military lodges no doubt contributed to the start of Templarism in America. Brother Paul Revere was made a Royal Arch Mason in December of 1769 in St Andrews Royal Arch Chapter. Subsequently he and about fifty other men were made Templars in the next several years.

Keep up the good work. Pray for one another and for our country and its leaders.
I hope to see each of you in lodge somewhere soon.

Richard