



The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in the Orient of Virginia

In the Scottish Rite, each state constitutes an “Orient,” and each city with a Scottish Rite Temple is known as a “Valley,” or separate Scottish Rite organization consisting of four “Bodies” – “The Lodge of Perfection,” which confers the “Ineffable Degrees” (4th through 14th), the “Chapter of Rose Croix” which confers the “Historical and Religious Degrees” (15th through 19th); the “Council of Kadosh” which confers the “Chivalric and Philosophical Degrees” (19th through 30th); and the “Consistory”, which confers the “Official and Ceremonial Degrees” (31st and 32nd). After experiencing all of these Degrees, one becomes a Scottish Rite Mason, or Master of the Royal Secret.

This grand order is more than merely a fraternity of good men engaged in benevolent practices of friendship and relief. In Virginia, it is a particularly aggressive and active order, a modern knighthood, and as such is devoted to the cause of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. To establish righteousness and ordain mercy, to protect the weak and combat all dogmas or doctrines that would imprison the human spirit. This is the mission of Scottish Rite Masonry.

The Scottish Rite seeks to refine within the hearts of men, personal morality and the sentiments of tolerance and fraternity. What has been said in this mission statement is quite vividly portrayed in the conferral of its several Degrees, and the Scottish Rite Mason has devoted his efforts to making the spirit of Masonry prevalent in today’s society.

The beginning

May 31, 1801, the first Supreme Council of the Thirty-third Degree, the Mother Council of the World, declared its existence with a motto of “Ordo ab Chao” (Order from Chaos). It announced a new 30-degree system of higher degrees that incorporated all 25 of the Order of the Royal Secret, and added eight more, including that of the 33°, Sovereign Grand Inspector General. This new organization declared control of higher-degree Masonry in America.

The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite was introduced into Virginia shortly after the organization of the Mother Supreme Council, at Charleston, S.C. in 1801.

The various degrees composing the Rite were communicated to several prominent Masons in Virginia from time to time, but it was not until the year 1824 that the Supreme Council of the Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A., gave a formal charter to a Virginia body. John Dove, writing about this event, says:

In 1761, being desirous to diffuse the teachings of this ritual, he (Frederick the Great) summoned a meeting of the Princes of the Royal Secret (thirty-second degree) at Paris, then commissioned Bro. Stephen Morin, Sovereign Grand Inspector General for the West Indies, and vested in him authority to appoint one for the North and one for the South of the United States, and imparting under his right the power to establish two Consistories.

Accordingly Morin, on his arrival in St. Domingo, appointed Bro. M. M. Hayes, Deputy Inspector General of North America, with power to appoint others. Bro. Hayes appointed Bro. Isaac Da Costa, Deputy Inspector General for the Southern part of the United States, and proceeded to Boston, where he took that office for the Northern Jurisdiction. Da Costa arrived in Charleston, South Carolina, where, in 1783, he opened a Sublime Grand Lodge of Perfection, but shortly afterward died. Bro. Hayes then appointed Bro. Joseph Myers the successor of Da Costa, who quickly traveled as far as Richmond, Virginia settled there in business, and imparted all or as many of these degrees of the Rite Ecossais to such Master Masons as he deemed worthy. In this manner, detached degrees of the Rite Ecossais, were spread through the Southern States. 1

Dove adds this comment a few pages farther on in his discussion:

Bro. Mackey, in his "Miscellany (vol. 2, p. 2) enumerates the thirty-three degrees of which the Scotch Rite is composed, but neither the Royal Arch, Holy Royal Arch, Select Master, nor Royal Master are found among them; yet Bro. Joseph Myers, while in Virginia, taught and practiced these degrees apparently by virtue of his power as Sovereign Grand Inspector General, and in this way assured that those degrees gained circulation throughout the Southern States. 2

The Grand Consistory of Virginia

It was most likely the presence of a number of brethren in Lynchburg, who had already received the degrees in this manner, which led them to petition for the right to organize a formal body in order to confer the degrees of the Scottish Rite in Virginia. 3 Their request was granted, and, on November 16, 1824, the Supreme Council of the Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A, chartered the Grand Consistory of Virginia, with its seat at Lynchburg. 4 The leader in the movement to establish the Scottish Rite in Lynchburg and in the State at large was James Penn, who, in some circles has been designated as the "father of Scottish Rite Masonry in Virginia." His career was such an unusual and distinguished one that extracts from Judge Lobingier's sketch of him are given below: 5

James Penn was born in Amherst County, Virginia, on September 22, 1794, and may have been related to John Penn, born in Caroline County, Virginia in 1741, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Engaging first in mercantile business James studied law, and in 1825 located in Madison County, Alabama, which he represented in the state Legislature, serving three years as speaker of the lower house. He then became a banker at Huntsville and in 1845 at Memphis, Tennessee. Stricken with paralysis in 1861, he lingered as an invalid for almost a decade, passing finally on July 21, 1870.

Brother Penn was made a Mason as early as 1817 in Marshall Lodge No. 39 of Lynchburg, Virginia, and later was its Master for several years and District Deputy Grand Master in 1820 and 1821.

Exalted in Richmond Chapter No. 3, R.A.M., in 1819, Brother Penn soon became a member of Euclid Chapter No. 15, at Danville, Virginia and in 1819 was Grand High Priest of Virginia Royal Arch Masons.

Brother Penn appears to have received the Scottish Rite Degrees, Fourth to Thirty-second, as well as the Cryptic Degrees, from James Cushman, a Deputy of the Supreme Council, and the time must have been antedated November 16, 1824, because on that date, he was named as one of the charter members of the Virginia Grand Consistory at Lynchburg. While admitted as an Active Member of the Supreme Council in 1859 he did not really take his seat (being excused from the session of 1860) until 1861 when he was appointed Grand Standard Bearer and later in the same session elected Lieutenant Grand Commander. He was present in 1862 or 1865 and in 1866 he resigned both office and membership and was transferred to the Emeriti List and voted a pension of one hundred and fifty dollars as part of the annuity raised by the Memphis Masons.

The Virginia Grand Consistory, however, remained active for less than a score of years, but was revived by the Supreme Council on May 19, 1845. ⁶ Yet no great progress was made in the dissemination of the Rite during the ensuing three decades. The War Between the States also intervened, and it was not until after 1870 that the Virginia Consistory showed signs of enlarged activity. During this period (1845-1870), the mainstay of Scottish Rite Masonry in Virginia was John Robin McDaniel, who was for thirty-one years an active member of the Supreme Council. He likewise presided over all of Virginia's Grand Bodies. Judge Lobingier writes of him: ⁷

John Robin McDaniel was born at Lynchburg, Virginia, July 9, 1807. With but a very limited education he attained marked success in business, becoming president of a savings bank, an insurance company and a railroad company, besides serving as member of the Lynchburg City Council for fifteen years and presiding for a decade over the local college board of trustees. He lost heavily as a result of the Civil War.

Brother McDaniel received the Symbolic Degrees in 1843 in Marshall Lodge No. 39 at Lynchburg, of which he was Master most of the time for the quarter-century preceding 1873, and was Grand Master of the Grand Lodge in 1861. He also received the Capitular Degrees in 1843 in Eureka Chapter No. 10, R.A.M., and was High Priest of it most of the time from 1844 to 1868, meanwhile serving as Grand High Priest in 1853. He was Knighted in DeMolay Commandery No. 4, K. T., in 1844, was its Eminent Commander from 1850 to 1878, and Grand Commander in 1869. He received the Scottish Rite Degrees in Virginia Consistory on May 19, 1845, and the following year was elected its Commander-in-Chief. He was made an active Member in 1847, and in 1870 was elected Lieutenant Grand Commander. He died in Washington, on May 14, 1878, just after the close of the Supreme Council session.

The revival of 1878

In 1878, McDaniel's report to the Supreme Council contained a résumé of the facts concerning the early years of the Rite in Virginia. In the same year Libertas Lodge of Perfection No. 5, in Richmond, was chartered by the Grand Consistory of Virginia.

The following extracts from Brother McDaniel's report are of interest:

It is with much regret I have to state, Virginia, in common with most if not all the Southern States, is still laboring under financial embarrassments, tending much to retard the progress of Masonry generally, but particularly the propagation of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. It is gratifying, however, to see that wherever it obtains a foothold, and has been worked, it is highly appreciated, and its beauties and influences acknowledge, because it gives to greater extent true Masonic information, much of which is not attainable elsewhere.

On November 16, 1824, the Supreme Council chartered the Grand Consistory of Virginia at Lynchburg, in the names of James Penn, Benj. F. Owen, M.D., George W. Woodson, William Diggs and F. F. Bowers. On January 16, 1825, Ill. Bro. John Baker, 33°, Deputy Sovereign Grand Inspector General of the Supreme Council at Charleston, conferred or communicated all the degrees from the 4th to the 14th on the following brethren: Joshua R. Holmes, Thomas McKenney, Samuel Garland, R. H. Gray, Howell Davis, M.D., and Rev. F. G. Smith.

The Rituals were all in manuscript, not very legibly written, and being a bad translation from the French, did not excite much interest. No other meeting occurred until May 12, 1845, when R. H. Gray, Howell Davis, M.D., and Thomas McKinney, under authority of the aforementioned charter, held a meeting in the Masonic Hall at Lynchburg and communicated the several degrees from 4° through the 32°, on several brethren.

The Grand Consistory of Virginia now has of its obedience three Lodges of Perfection, a Chapter of Rose Croix, a Council of Kadosh, and there is a well-founded hope during the year 1878 to add three other Lodges of Perfection, another Chapter of Rose Croix, and another Council of Kadosh; and, in 1879, a Particular Consistory, if it be the pleasure of the Supreme Council, to authorize the establishment of the same.

There are now some evidences of success, the result of efforts to establish the Rite on a firm basis, in Richmond, Petersburg, Portsmouth, Fredericksburg, Alexandria, Front Royal, Charlottesville, and Danville. Through the efficient services and hearty cooperation of Ill. Bro. John L. Roper, 33°, the Rite was, in 1874, first established in Norfolk, Virginia. Grand Commander Albert Pike, in his allocution for 1878, made this comment on the Virginia situation:

In Virginia, like results have been achieved by the untiring zeal of our venerable brother, the Lieutenant Grand Commander, and the energy and ability of our Brother Roper. The Lodge of Perfection at Norfolk is in a flourishing condition; one that gives promise of good works has been established at Deep Creek, and it is quite certain that others will be established at several places in the state. It should be stated that a Lodge of Perfection had been established in Lynchburg in 1869, and this, together with the Lodges at Norfolk and Deep Creek, constituted the three Lodges of Perfection, to which McDaniel referred in his report quoted above. The Lodge of Perfection located in Deep Creek, County of Norfolk, was called the Albert G. Mackey Lodge of Perfection and was established around February 1877. 8

The transactions of the Supreme Council for 1878 indicate that the Grand Consistory of Virginia reported two initiates for the year, with a total membership of 35 and total receipts of \$55. Beginning with the establishment of a Lodge of Perfection in Richmond in 1878, however, the center of Scottish Rite influence shifted in time from Lynchburg to the capital city. John F. Mayer, 33°, and Charles A. Nesbitt, 33°, for many years Inspector General and Deputy of the Supreme Council, respectively, in Virginia, resided in Richmond, and the

Richmond Bodies grew gradually, showing the largest membership of any of the Virginia Valleys at the time. Nine years before the establishment of the Lodge of Perfection in Richmond, however, a reference to the local situation is found in the *Balustre* of the Grand Consistory of Virginia, meeting at Lynchburg on December 27, 1869. The following resolution was adopted at that meeting:

Certain Brother Masons residing in the City of Richmond, and within the jurisdiction of this Grand Consistory, have received from Ill. William S. Rockwell, 33°, S.G.I.G. of the State of Georgia, the Degrees of the A.A.S.R. up to and including the 32°, on certain conditions to us officially unknown, but believed to be conflict with the statutes and institutes of the Supreme Council aforesaid. And whereas a particular Consistory, a Chapter of Rose Croix, and a Lodge of Perfection were said to be established in the city of Richmond, Virginia., without an application to or the knowledge of this Grand Consistory, etc. Accordingly, a committee of the Grand Consistory was appointed to confer with the Richmond brethren concerned.

On January 12, 1870, the committee submitted its report and was discharged. The Grand Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Consistory was instructed to correspond with Grand Commander Pike in reference to the matter, but little else was done until 1878. In that year, it will be recalled, John Robin McDaniel, 33°, S.G.I.G., reported to the Supreme Council on April 15, that the situation in Richmond looked promising for the establishment of a Lodge of Perfection before the end of the year. This prophecy was indeed fulfilled.

On December 18, 1878, the degrees from the 4° through the 14° were communicated to more than 30 Master Masons of Richmond by Grand Commander Albert Pike, assisted by William Morton Ireland, Secretary General of the Supreme Council. No minutes seem to have been kept, unfortunately, either of this meeting or of those which immediately preceded it. The first recorded minutes are dated December 30, 1878. John L. Roper Lodge of Perfection No. 5 was instituted on December 20, two days after Brothers Pike and Ireland had invested the brethren with the degrees as mentioned above. St. Albans Hall, which was the Masonic Center of Richmond in those days, was also the scene of the early Scottish Rite activities in that city, though, on January 5, 1879, it was voted by the Lodge of Perfection to move to the Masonic Hall, home of Richmond Randolph Lodge No. 19, A.F. & A.M., and of Richmond Royal Arch Chapter No. 3.

A time of controversy among the Brethren

About 1882, the Grand Consistory of Virginia seems to have discontinued its work and from that time, the administration of the Scottish Rite in Virginia has been directly under the supervision of the Supreme Council, acting through its Sovereign Grand Inspector General or the Deputy of the Supreme Council. During the same period the activities of the Cerneau Rite in Virginia were at their height.

Named after Joseph Cerneau (1763–1845), “Cerneauism” was a rival and generally deemed an illegitimate form of Scottish Rite Masonry that challenged the SJ and NMJ during most of the 1800s. Cerneau, a Frenchman and resident of Havana, Cuba, was a jeweler and Secretary of a Pennsylvania Lodge, La Temple des Virtus Theogalis. In 1806 he was appointed Inspector of the 25-degree Order of the Royal Secret (Rite of Perfection), with absolute authority to create one new 25° Mason each year in Cuba. His patent is in the archives of the Supreme Council, 33°, S.J.

Cerneau bodies had been established in Richmond, Bristol, and other Virginia cities, and the ensuing contest between them and the bodies under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Council was a long and bitterly fought one. Many of the members of the latter did not consider it a violation of their obligation or allegiance to accept membership also in the Cerneau groups. Hence, it is not surprising that Grand Commander Pike found it necessary to expel certain Virginia Masons from the Richmond Bodies in 1883, and at the same time he “black-listed” a number of Master Masons (not members of the Pike rite) for affiliating with the Cerneau bodies. The Grand Commander took similar action in other Virginia localities as well.

In 1884, Pelican Chapter of Rose Croix No. 2 was chartered, and the St. Omar Council, Knights Kadosh No. 1, followed in 1889, both being located in Richmond. In the latter year the total membership of the Richmond bodies was but 31, while that of other Virginia bodies was correspondingly small. Dalcho Consistory No. 1 was chartered in Richmond in 1890 and, in the same year, the name of the Lodge of Perfection was changed from “John L. Roper” to “Libertas.” The next ten years constituted a “lean” period for the Virginia bodies. Albert Pike died in 1891, and his passing affected the Rite adversely in almost every State under the jurisdiction of the Southern Supreme Council. John F. Mayer, S.G.I.G., Charles A. Nesbitt (Mayer’s Deputy), James M. Clift (all 33° Masons), and other devoted members throughout Virginia had a vision of the future, however, and continued their efforts for the success of the Scottish Rite bodies.

The Rite moves forward

The Supreme Council meeting in 1911, issued the charters, dated October 16, 1911 to the Valley of Alexandria for the formation of: Washington Memorial Lodge of Perfection, Randolph Chapter Knights Rose Croix No. 3, Lafayette Preceptory of Knights of Kadosh No. 2 and Virginia Consistory No. 2.

In 1912, the Valley of Newport News became the 7th active Valley in the Orient of Virginia. Their first meeting place was the Masonic Hall, 2701-04 Washington Avenue in Newport News. In 1923, the Lodge of Perfection moved to the Masonic Temple, Washington Avenue and 33rd Street, and held the first regular meeting there in February. The Charter was issued for the Newport News Chapter of Rose Croix on October 26, 1923. In July 1976 the Newport News Bodies moved to the Masonic Temple on West Queen Street, Hampton, until the completion of their current Temple in 1987.

Richmond was the first city in Virginia to have a Scottish Rite temple, the result of planning and efforts lasting more than twenty years. It was occupied for the first time in 1921, being dedicated by Grand Commander George Fleming Moore. The Alexandria bodies have owned for some years a building used for a Scottish Rite club, but no other Virginia Locality possessed quarters owned exclusively by the members of the Rite.

On the death of John F. Mayer in 1919, Robert S. Crump, 33°, was appointed Deputy of the Supreme Council in Virginia. In 1921, he was elected an Active Member of the Supreme Council and Sovereign Grand Inspector General. He passed away in 1949. The fifteen years preceding 1936 was an era of great progress for the Scottish Rite in Virginia, and in 1928 the Richmond Scottish Rite Masons celebrated the golden jubilee of their Lodge of Perfection. Charles A. Nesbitt, 33°, Grand Cross, a member of the original group which received the charter in 1878, was the guest of honor on that occasion.

Scottish Rite Masonry was organized in Danville, Virginia in April 1923 when 36 Scottish Rite Brethren signed an application for Letters Temporary requesting the formulation of the Danville Scottish Rite Bodies. This application was presented to Illustrious Robert Shields Crump, 33°, Sovereign Grand Inspector General in Virginia by Brothers J. Edward Wagner of Danville and C. Fisk White of Greensboro, North Carolina and was subsequently approved on May 7, 1923.

According to available records the first instance of the Council of Kadosh and Consistory Degrees being conferred in Danville was April 27, 1927. These Degrees were conferred by teams from the Richmond, Virginia Bodies under special dispensation issued by Robert S. Crump, S.G.I.G. in Virginia at that time. The Council of Kadosh and Consistory were chartered in Danville on October 22, 1929.

During 1929, the Valley of Alexandria approved its first set of comprehensive bylaws. The Fall Reunion, held Oct. 15-18, was the first conferral of Masonic degrees by any group in the George Washington Masonic National Memorial. The meetings of the Danville Bodies were held in the Blue Lodge room of the Masonic Temple in Danville. Eventually the Scottish Rite auditorium was built on the 11th floor of the Masonic Temple. A Dedication Ceremony for the new auditorium was held on October 4, 1947, with Mt. Wor. Harold Stephenson delivering the keynote address. This coincided with the opening session of what was then known as the Scottish Rite Council of Virginia, which was meeting in Danville for the first time.

In 1949, Robert Shields Crump, 33°, died and Robert South Barrett, 33° (1942 Grand Master of Masons in Virginia) was appointed Deputy of the Supreme Council in Virginia. At the following Biennial Reunion, he was made an Active Member of the Supreme Council and S.G.I.G. of the Supreme Council in Virginia. The Valley of Newport News received their Charters for the Council of Kadosh and Consistory on October 22nd. Seeing this and predicated upon the large ratio of Portsmouth Brethren that were members of the Norfolk Scottish Rite and realizing the leadership and enthusiasm that existed among these members, the idea of forming the Rite in Portsmouth had been seriously considered for some time and on November 17, 1953, fourteen of these leaders met and planned to obtain the necessary signatures requesting Scottish Rite Bodies in Portsmouth.

Within three weeks 593 Portsmouth Brethren were signed up. Thirty more than were already members of the Norfolk Bodies. Fifty-nine signatures were obtained in the neighboring counties. The next month, December 19, 1953, the four Bodies were organized. The request for Letters Temporary, containing 652 signatures, was forwarded to Ill. Robert S. Barrett, 33° Sovereign Grand Inspector General in Virginia on December 28, 1953.

In deference to his vision, devotion to Masonry in all forms, and his untiring efforts in this present endeavor, Ill. Clifford V. Schooler, 33° IGH, was elected to head the four Bodies. Ill. Rudolph R. Cooke, 33°, IGH, was elected Secretary-Registrar and Brother Frank Raymond DeGraw, 32°, KCCH, Treasurer. Ill. William L. Sterling, 33°, was appointed Director of Work. The first Stated Meeting authorized under Letters Temporary was held February 12, 1954. The four Bodies were chartered on October 20, 1955. The charters were presented on March 5, 1956 by Ill. Charles E. Webber, 33°, the Deputy to the Sovereign Grand Inspector General in Virginia.

Robert South Barrett, 33°, died in 1959 and Charles E. “Ted” Webber, 33° (1948 Grand Master of Masons in Virginia) was appointed Deputy of the Supreme Council in Virginia and was subsequently made an active member of the Supreme Council and S.G.I.G. in Virginia in 1961.

Also in 1959, the Supreme Council requested that the Valley of Norfolk change the names of their bodies from McDaniel Lodge of Perfection, Frederick Webber Chapter of Rose Croix, John Moncure Council of Kadosh and Auld Consistory to Norfolk Lodge of Perfection, Norfolk Chapter of Rose Croix, Norfolk Council of Kadosh, and Norfolk Consistory.

In 1961, at the request of the SGIG and the Supreme Council, the names of all four bodies of the Valley of Alexandria were changed to Alexandria Lodge of Perfection, Alexandria Chapter of Rose Croix, Alexandria Council Knights Kadosh and Alexandria Consistory. The same request was made to the Valley of Richmond which had their names changed from Libertas Lodge of Perfection, Pelican Chapter of Rose Croix, St. Omar Council of Kadosh and Dalcho Consistory to Richmond Lodge of Perfection, Richmond Chapter of Rose Croix, Richmond Council of Kadosh and Richmond Consistory. Finally, the Valley of Newport News was requested to change the name of their Veritas Lodge of Perfection to the Newport News Lodge of Perfection.

On June 24, 1969, the groundbreaking ceremony was held for the new Valley of Alexandria Temple which was to be built on West Braddock Road. On September 27, the cornerstone was laid. Henry Knox Field Lodge was the host lodge with Ill. Charles E. “Ted” Webber, 33° S.G.I.G. in Virginia, serving as Worshipful Master Pro Tem. George Washington’s silver trowel was once again brought into service during this ceremony. Most Worshipful H. Bruce Green, a Valley member, gave an inspiring address.

In 1981, Charles E. “Ted” Webber, 33°, became an Emeritus Member of the Supreme Council and L. Douglas Delano, 33° (1976 Grand Master of Masons in Virginia) was appointed as the Deputy of the Supreme Council in Virginia. He held this office for only two years, because in 1983, David Kruger, 33°, was appointed as the Deputy of the Supreme Council in Virginia. In 1985, David Kruger, 33°, was made an Active Member of the Supreme Council and S.G.I.G. of the Supreme Council in Virginia. In honor of “Ted” Webber, 33°, the Valley of Roanoke named their Temple after him.

The Ground-breaking Ceremony for the Valley of Newport News’ Temple took place on November 30, 1985, and the Cornerstone was laid by Most Worshipful Oscar Wood Tate, Grand Master of Masons in Virginia, on January 10, 1987. The first meeting in their new Temple was the stated meeting on April 22, 1987. It was finally dedicated on November 14, 1987. In an innovative move during 1998, the Valley of Danville decided to take Scottish Rite "on the road" during the months of July and August when no Stated meetings are held in accordance with their by-laws. These meetings were held in locations, which are distant from Danville in order to allow their members in these areas to fellowship with Officers of the Lodge of Perfection without having to travel to Danville.

The Richmond Valley's principle charity is the Scottish Rite Childhood Language Center at Richmond, co-located on the Valley's campus on Hermitage Road in Richmond. Incorporated in 1989, the Center was completed in 1991. Since its inception, the Childhood Language Center has helped well over 10,500 children with speech and language disorders.

Through this Center, the Scottish Rite has helped children process auditory information which has helped them speak and understand the spoken word.

During the 1999 Masonic year, The Orient of Virginia participated in a Statewide Spring Reunion named in memory of Valley of Alexandria member, Ill. Charles A. Sinclair, 33°. This reunion was the first conferral in the Southern Jurisdiction of the five obligatory degrees using the Revised Pike scripts. The Valleys of Portsmouth, Norfolk, Roanoke, Richmond and Alexandria were the Valleys honored to confer the degrees.

The Danville Scottish Rite Bodies along with Roman Eagle Lodge No. 122, Morotock Lodge No. 210, and the other Appendant Bodies of Masonry in Danville have entered into a joint venture with the purchase of the former Post Office facility off West Main Street in Danville near Ballou Park. The high cost of maintaining the Masonic Temple, the lack of interested tenants for the rental space in the building not used by the Masonic Bodies and several other factors contributed to this move.

Significant notes from the minutes of the Richmond Lodge of Perfection 9

1801 - Organization of the Southern Supreme Council (Mother Council of the World) at Charleston, South Carolina, on May 31st. Shortly after that date the Rite was conferred on several individual Masons in Virginia. As early as 1788 a Deputy of the Supreme Council in Virginia was appointed; said to be a Brother A. Forst. (unconfirmed).

1824 - Establishment of the Grand Consistory of Virginia (at Lynchburg) on November 16. James Penn was said to be a leader of the efforts.

1845 – May 19 was the date of the revival of the Grand Consistory of Virginia. It had been inactive for several years.

1847 – John McDaniel was made an active member of the Supreme Council, the first in Virginia.

1859 – James Penn received the 33° from Albert Pike, and became the second active member of the Supreme Council from Virginia.

1861 – James Penn is made the Lieutenant Grand Commander of the Southern jurisdiction.

1866 – James Penn became an Emeritus member of the Supreme Council.

1870 - John Robin McDaniel becomes Lieutenant Grand Commander of the Supreme Council.

1878 – John L. Roper elected active member and appointed Deputy of the Supreme Council in Virginia and North Carolina. Eight years later he becomes an emeritus member. On December 18, the 4° through 14° are communicated to over 30 Master Masons by General Albert Pike, 33°, Sovereign Grand Commander, assisted by William M. Ireland, Secretary General.



St. Albans Hall (c.1982)

John L. Roper Lodge of Perfection No. 5 was instituted in Richmond on December 20 at St. Albans Hall, also known as The Crenshaw Building, an historic Masonic Lodge located at 300 East Main Street, in downtown Richmond. It was built in 1869, by Metropolitan Lodge No.11 and Joppa Lodge No.40, and was a three-story, stuccoed brick Italianate style building. The Hall consisted of shops, a concert hall, as well as Masonic Lodge meeting rooms on the third floor, and served as an important focus of post-American Civil War Richmond's social and political life. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. No written records of the meetings appear to have been kept prior to the first recorded minutes of December 30.



Masons Hall (c.1882)

1879 - On January 5, it was voted by the Lodge of Perfection to move to Masons Hall, at 18th & East Main streets, home of Richmond Randolph Lodge No. 19, A.F. & A.M. and Richmond Royal Arch Chapter No. 3.

1882 – The next meeting of the Rite was held at St. Albans Hall on January 31 for the purpose of reorganizing the Rite. The Grand Consistory of Virginia was discontinued, and was replaced by the Sovereign Grand Inspector General (S.G.I.G.) of the Supreme Council in Virginia. Supreme Council fees on 33 members were paid on August 18.

1883 – The Richmond Consistory No. 6 instituted on May 15, under the Cerneau Rites with W.T. Allen, Commander. A letter was received on June 15 from Grand Commander Pike expelling several members of the Rite in Richmond, and ‘blacklisting’ a large number of Master Masons for their affiliation with the Cerneau rite.

1884 – Membership was reported as 29. Pelican Chapter of Rose Croix was chartered on April 10.

1885 – This was the height of the Cerneau rituals in Virginia, causing great discord and division within the Rite. Many sets of minutes from this time period report that no quorum was present.

1888 – John F. Mayer elected S.G.I.G., serving until his passing in 1919.

1889 – St. Omar Council, Knights Kadosh was chartered on May 2, and the Dalcho Consistory was chartered on September 6.

1890 – John L. Roper Lodge of Perfection is renamed Libertas Lodge on April 21. On December 15 the KCCH degree work was held for the first time in Richmond.

1891 – A Lodge of Sorrow was held for General Albert Pike on May 3 with over 2000 in attendance. Report to the Supreme Council showed a membership of 59, with 18 new candidates.

1893 – A committee was appointed to examine the books of the treasurer, and a balance of \$6.40 was shown. Membership now totaled 97 for the year.

1897 – Valley membership is now at 119.

1900 – A second revival of the Scottish Rite began in Virginia.



Masonic Temple (c.1959)

1901 – On April 4 the first meeting was held in the Commandery room at the Masonic Temple at Adams & Broad Streets in Richmond.

1902 – March 10, the regular meeting night was changed to the fourth Monday of the month.

1904 – A committee report from March 28 reported that the Lodge had expended \$150 for the purchase of robes.

1905 – March 27 the treasurer was directed to purchase one \$500 City of Richmond bond.

1906 – A committee recommended the election of three trustees to take charge of all investment funds, with the treasurer to make monthly reports to the membership.

1909 – The membership voted that one officer should serve as treasurer for all bodies.

1910 – March 14, was the first meeting of the Washington Memorial Lodge of Perfection (Alexandria) William Le Hew was first Venerable Master. The following year charters were issued for Randolph Chapter Knights Rose Croix, Lafayette Preceptory of Knights of Kadosh No. 2, and Virginia Consistory No. 2.

1911 – On November 11 the presiding officers of the four bodies were empowered to purchase property on Monument Avenue for a future building site.

1912 – October 21 the Valley of Newport News Lodge of Perfection becomes the 7th active Valley in Virginia.

1913 – A bi-monthly publication for the Rite was authorized. This was named ‘Dalcho’, and was the predecessor of the Scottish Rite News.

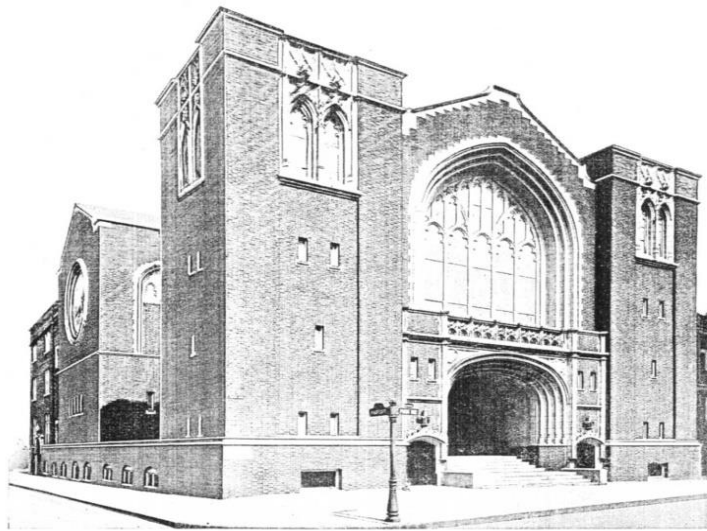
1914 – A reunion was held in May with 100 candidates. Officers of the Albert Pike Consistory, of Washington, D.C., conferred the 32°.

1915 – March 22 the Committee on Cathedral recommended the purchase of Grace Covenant Church, at Park & Harrison Streets, for \$41,500. The report was adopted and the trustees were authorized to sell real estate at the corner of Monument & Deep Run Street.

1917 – During the year the Valley subscribed to \$7,500 in U.S. Liberty Bonds. Spring and Fall Reunions brought in 152 candidates.

1918 – The January meeting was not held by order of the city Fuel Administrator declaring it ‘Heatless Monday’.

1919 – Robert S. Crump is appointed Deputy of the Supreme Council in Virginia. The Scottish Rite Guard was organized on March 24, with no mention of the presiding officers in minutes of the Lodge of Perfection. The Guard did not settle into a regular working unit 1926. April 28 the first regular meeting was held in the new Temple, and the Spring Reunion had 150 candidates.



SCOTTISH RITE TEMPLE,
Corner Harrison Street and Park Avenue, Richmond, Va.

Photo by Foster

Scottish Rite Temple (c.1921)

1921 – Dedication of the Scottish Rite Temple at Park & Harrison streets in Richmond was held April 9. The building was previously used by the congregation of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church. Robert Crump was made S.G.I.G. in Virginia and an active member of the Supreme Council. The Spring reunion class was composed of 269 candidates.

1922 – The Order of DeMolay was authorized on January 23, and an advisory board was appointed. The first class was instituted on March 22, with a class of 65 candidates, the first in Virginia.

1923 – Scottish Rite Masonry approved in Danville, May 7th. Dues were raised to \$10.

1928 – The Golden Jubilee Celebration of the Richmond bodies was held November 22, 1928 in the Temple at Park & Harrison Streets. The occasion featured the symbolic burning of the mortgage documents. Many distinguished Masons were present including the Sovereign Grand Commander, John H. Coles.

1929 – October 15-18 was the first conferral of Masonic degrees in the George Washington National Memorial. The Council of Kadosh and Consistory were chartered in Danville.

1932 – On February 17 a celebration was held to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Brother George Washington. The Band and Glee Club of the Masonic Home, as well as the Chanters of Acca Temple, were on hand to provide entertainment for the gala.

1934 – At the Maundy Thursday Service on March 29, Brother and Dr. Edward Calish, Rabbi of Beth Ahaba Congregation, made a very comprehensive address on the growth of Freemasonry. He expressed fears for its survival under the dictatorships of Mussolini and Hitler. This month was the fifth anniversary of the Rose Croix Chapter Charter.

1938 – The Spring class included three Past Grand Masters of Masons in Virginia: John T. Cochran, Thomas W. Hooper, and C. Vernon Eddy.

1939 – The Council of Kadosh was fifty years old on May 22, and the Consistory reached fifty on September 6. The Rite fared badly during the ‘Great Depression’ of the 1930’s. Classes were very small, most times less than a dozen, occasionally as many as thirty.

1943 – On the final day of the Fall Reunion (November 17) a portrait of Ill. Robert Shields Crump was unveiled. It was the work of Richmond Artist John D. Slavin. There were 156 candidates in the class, the largest one in many years.

1944 – On the final day of the Fall Reunion, Ill. John Henry Coles was present for the unveiling of his portrait. There were 150 candidates in the class.

1947 – The Scottish Rite Temple was dedicated in Danville on October 4th. Keynote speaker was M.W. Harold Stephenson, Grand Master of Masons in Virginia.

1949 – Robert S. Barrett (Grand Master in 1942) was appointed Deputy of the Supreme Council. Two years later he became S.G.I.G. in Virginia. On December 31, membership reached a new high of 3,056.

1953 – Valley of Newport News received Charters for the Council of Kadosh and Consistory on October 22nd.

1955 – Charters for all four bodies of the Valley of Portsmouth were issued.

1957 – October 28 was the 75th anniversary of the Lodge of Perfection and was celebrated with an elaborate banquet. The 70 member class was named the ‘Diamond Jubilee Class’.

1959 – On March 23 a request from the Supreme Council was brought before the membership to change the individual names of the four bodies to ‘Richmond’. The resolution was presented, and rejected twice, before finally being passed in 1961.

1959 – Charles E. Webber, 33^o (Grand Master in 1948) is appointed Deputy of the Supreme Council in Virginia.

1961 – Valley of Richmond votes to change the names of its bodies from Libertas Lodge of Perfection, Pelican Chapter of Rose Croix, St. Omar Council of Kadosh, Dalcho Consistory to Richmond Lodge of Perfection, Chapter of Rose Croix, Council of Kadosh, and Consistory.

1963 – The Fall class had 117 candidates, the largest in eleven years. Valley membership reached the 4,000 mark on December 31. The building Committee reported that Richmond Professional Institute had approached the Rite about buying our Temple. It was not a situation where we could refuse to sell, as this State supported institution could exercise the right of eminent domain, simply condemn the building and take it from us. The first offer of \$235,000 by RPI was rejected, and negotiations continued over the next 18 months.

1965 – On August 23 the committee reported an offer of \$275,000 from the college for the purchase of the site, and it was accepted. At that same meeting the Lodge authorized the purchase of 4.4 acres of land in the 4200 block of Hermitage Road for \$67,500.

1966 – March 26 proper zoning changes were secured for the new Temple construction. On May 23 the building committee was authorized to proceed with engaging an architect to produce preliminary drawings, and soil tests for a new Temple. On September 26, the Lodge dues were increased to \$20 annually.

1967 – Final plans for the new building were approved on February 27 with an estimated cost of \$1,551,907, including paving and lighting in the parking area. A ground breaking ceremony was held on Sunday, October 15, with Ill. Charles E. Webber, 33^o, as the principal speaker.



The present Scottish Rite Temple (c.2010)

1969 – The Grand Lodge of Virginia laid the cornerstone of the new Temple, with Masonic Ceremony, on April 12, with Mt. Wor. Julian C. Roden, presiding. The first meeting held in the Temple was the Stated Communication of the Lodge of Perfection on September 22. By-Law changes were adopted raising the dues to \$25 annually. The Temple is considered an International-style structure within the Hermitage Road local, state, and national historic districts, which a focus on the Victorian-era residential architecture nearby.

1970 – On May 19, an historical event took place in the new auditorium. The 33rd degree was conferred on former Governor of Virginia, Brother Mills E. Godwin, and U.S. Senator from Oregon, Brother Mark E. Hatfield. The Scottish Rite Woman's Club, composed of female blood relatives and wives of Rite members, was organized. They work diligently in various fund raising activities, the proceeds of which are presented to the Rite.

1971 – At the February Stated the Venerable Master, after consultation with the line officers and heads of the other three bodies, noted that Masters would only serve one year terms, instead of two years. A special one-day reunion class was held February 27 with 271 new candidates.

1974 – A second one-day class resulted in 358 new Masters of the Royal Secret. The Fall Reunion class saw the use of new scenery for the first time in the new auditorium. A committee, led by J. Dalton Dutton, spent many hours of hard manual labor preparing and hanging the new scenery drops. Membership in the Valley as of December 31 was 5,078.

1975 – Charles E. Webber, 33°, is elected Lieutenant Grand Commander.

1981 – L. Douglas Delano, 33° (Grand Master in 1976) is appointed Deputy of the Supreme Council in Virginia.

1983 – David Kruger, 33°, is appointed Deputy of the Supreme Council in Virginia. Two years later he became S.G.I.G. in Virginia.

1989 - The Childhood Language Center located on the Valley's campus on Hermitage Road is incorporated, and the Center was completed in 1991.

1999 – The statewide Spring Reunion, named in memory of Ill. Charles A. Sinclair, 33°, was the first conferral in the Southern Jurisdiction of the five obligatory degrees using the revised Pike scripts.



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Researched and prepared by Douglas M. Messimer, 32°, Valley of Richmond, in part from the following sources:

1 John Dove, Royal Arch Text Book, Richmond, 1853, pp. 90 and 91.

2 Dove, op. cit., p. 83.

3 This and much of the following information is from the writings of R:W:: Robert D. Ford, 33°, at the time, Grand Senior Deacon of the Grand Lodge of Virginia and Secretary of the Richmond Scottish Rite bodies.

4 The Supreme Council, 33°, A. & A. S. R., Southern Jurisdiction, U. S. A., Washington, 1931, p. 140.

5 The Supreme Council, 33°, A. & A. S. R., Southern Jurisdiction, pp. 195, 196.

6 The Supreme Council, 33°, A. & A. S. R., Southern Jurisdiction, pp. 171, 434, 437.

7 Ibidem, pp. 176, 177.

8 William L. Fox, Lodge of the Double-Headed Eagle – Two Centuries of Scottish Rite Freemasonry in America's Southern Jurisdiction, 1997, p. 100.

9 Richmond Lodge of Perfection minutes, 1878-2000.

Photos with credit to Wikipedia and the City of Richmond archives.