

## **The Royal Arch: Appendant Or Concordant?**

By

Rt. Wor. Douglas L. Jordan, PDDGM, PGHP

**Presented to A. Douglas Smith, Jr. Lodge of Research, #1949**

**On**

**December 15. 2007**

*The opinions presented in this paper are strictly those of the author and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Master and Wardens of the A. Douglas Smith Jr., Lodge of Research #1949 or the official views of the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Virginia.*

---

© 2013 - A. Douglas Smith, Jr., Lodge of Research #1949, AF&AM - All Rights Reserved

The Royal Arch: Appendant Or Concordant?, by Rt. Wor. Douglas L. Jordan, PDDGM, PGHP, Presented  
December 15. 2007

---

© 2013 - A. Douglas Smith, Jr., Lodge of Research #1949, AF&AM - All Rights Reserved

The Royal Arch: Appendant Or Concordant?, by Rt. Wor. Douglas L. Jordan, PDDGM, PGHP, Presented  
December 15, 2007

# The Royal Arch: Appendant Or Concordant?

by

Rt. Wor. Douglas L. Jordan, PDDGM, PGHP

There has been some discussion on whether the Royal Arch Chapter is an “appendant” or a “concordant” body with respect to the Grand Lodge. This leads to the natural question, what is the difference between an Appendant Body and a Concordant Body? In an effort to determine the relations, I consulted those classic Masonic Encyclopedias – Coil<sup>1</sup> and Mackey<sup>2</sup>. Neither of these works lists *Appendant Bodies*, and for *Concordant Degrees*, Coil refers the reader to “High or Higher Degrees.” There is no entry for Concordant Bodies. Thus it appears that these are modern usages.

So, turning to the modern resource, I consulted the Internet: The Free Dictionary<sup>3</sup> defines “Appendant” as: *Affixed as an appendage, or accompanying, attendant.* It defines “Concordant” as: *being of the same opinion.* Thus one would believe that concordant bodies have a somewhat closer affinity to each other than do appendant ones.

The website of The Grand Lodge of Virginia<sup>4</sup> avoids making any distinctions. It reads:

There is no higher degree than the Master Mason’s Degree or Third Degree in Freemasonry. The Master Mason’s Degree is the foundation of all appendant bodies associated with Freemasonry. However, there are many wonderful appendant bodies in Freemasonry that help and support charities throughout the United States and the Commonwealth of Virginia. It is with their help and support

that we are able to raise more than 2.6 million dollars a day to help children with medical needs all over the world.

The site then lists the various groups under the headings: Masonic Organizations, Masonic Organizations for Men and Women, and Masonic Youth Organizations.

This led me to wonder what other Grand Lodges had to say. A Google search on *freemasonry "Grand Lodge" +concordant +appendant* produced about 1210 hits the first Grand Lodge being that of British Columbia and Yukon.<sup>5</sup> On their site, the various bodies are arranged in four groups:

## Concordant Bodies

The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite  
York Rite Masonry

## Bodies in amity

The Royal Order of Scotland  
The Order of the Red Cross of  
Constantine

## Masonic clubs

The Ancient Arabic Order Nobles of the  
Mystic Shrine  
The Grotto

## Appendant women’s organizations

The Order of the Eastern Star  
The Order of the Amaranth  
The Daughters of the Nile  
Ladies of the Oriental Shrine  
The White Shrine of Jerusalem

<sup>1</sup> *Coil’s Masonic Encyclopedia*, Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Company, Inc., 1961, p139

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, Albert G. Mackey, The Masonic History Company, 1919.

<sup>3</sup> [www.thefreedictionary.com](http://www.thefreedictionary.com)

<sup>4</sup> [www.grandlodgeofvirginia.org/appendant\\_bodies/index.htm](http://www.grandlodgeofvirginia.org/appendant_bodies/index.htm)

<sup>5</sup> [freemasonry.bcy.ca/textfiles/concordant.html](http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/textfiles/concordant.html)

Appendant youth organizations  
 The Order of DeMolay  
 The International Order of Job's  
 Daughters

The Grand Lodge of Hawaii<sup>6</sup> states:

As the brethren know quite well, Freemasonry is not just limited to the Blue Lodge. Appendant and concordant bodies for the brethren, their wives and female relatives, sons, and daughters are available.

While some of these organizations require its applicants to either be Master Masons or related to Master Masons, others (such as the Order of the Rainbow for Girls and the International Order of DeMolay for boys) do not.

It then lists the various bodies as follows:

Appendant Bodies for Master Masons:  
 Scottish Rite Bodies, Orient of Hawaii  
 York Rite Bodies  
 Aloha Shriners of the Pacific  
 National Sojourners

Concordant Bodies for Master Masons, their wives and female relatives:  
 The Order of the Eastern Star

Concordant Bodies for boys:  
 The International Order of DeMolay

Concordant Bodies for girls:  
 The International Order of the Rainbow  
 for Girls

The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts<sup>7</sup> web page on "Masonic Organizations" reads:

Freemasonry's family consists of many organizations, some are parts of Freemasonry, some are appendant bodies

of the fraternity where an entrance requirement is that a man be a Master Mason, and still others are concordant bodies, organizations that operate alongside Masonry.

However, their listing of organizations makes no attempt to say which belong to which category.

The webpage of the Grand Lodge of Minnesota<sup>8</sup> has a different view:

The Masonic family is a loosely defined grouping of those bodies with practices and beliefs complementary to Freemasonry that also either restricts their membership to regular Freemasons in good standing or to relatives of regular Freemasons in good standing. Those organizations restricted to Freemasons are generally termed concordant while those restricted to relatives, or requiring a Freemason as sponsor, are generally termed appendant. There is little agreement on the use of these terms; in the narrowest sense only the Scottish and York Rites are styled concordant while the Shrine and Grotto, not conferring degrees, would be defined as Masonic clubs.

Adding to the confusion, some Craft Grand Lodge jurisdictions will recognize those bodies by constitutionally recording that they are simply "in amity" with them. Not all Grand Lodges will recognize the same bodies. The important point is to understand that these bodies, and the various degrees they confer, are auxiliary or additional, and not superior to Craft Freemasonry.

<sup>6</sup> [hawaiiifreemason.org/bodies/](http://hawaiiifreemason.org/bodies/)

<sup>7</sup>

[www.massfreemasonry.org/index.tpl?SID=1197407276896283&ng\\_view=18](http://www.massfreemasonry.org/index.tpl?SID=1197407276896283&ng_view=18)

<sup>8</sup> [www.mn-masons.org/page916.aspx](http://www.mn-masons.org/page916.aspx)

The Grand Lodge of Washington<sup>9</sup> page “Concordant Bodies” is headed: “The following links are not in any way, shape, or form an all-inclusive listing of Concordant / Appendant Masonic Bodies' websites.” This is followed by nineteen entries in no particular order.

The Grand Lodge of Maryland<sup>10</sup> following a common practice, speaks of the Masonic Family, and lists sixteen bodies with no distinctions. In the same way The Grand Lodge of New York<sup>11</sup> refers only to Masonic Bodies and makes no attempt to classify them in any way.

Thus, it is clear that the terms Appendant and Concordant mean different things to different people, but I believe that in the case of the Royal Arch, neither term applies because the Royal Arch degrees occupy a unique position among the Masonic Degrees. Like the degrees of the Lodge, their origin is lost in time. The earliest reference to the degrees is in a 1743 newspaper report that Lodge No. 21 in Youghal, County Cork, Ireland had a St. John’s Day parade in which “The Royall Arch was carried by two Excellent Masons.” This is of significance to us since originally the Royal Arch degrees were conferred in Virginia lodges using the Irish ritual.

The first documented evidence in the world concerning the conferring of the Royal Arch Degree is found in the minutes of the Lodge at Fredericksburg, now No. 4, and bears the date of December 22, 1753 - the Lodge was not chartered until 1758. Between this earliest record and constitution of the Grand Lodge, the record in Virginia is sparse, but it is clear that the Royal Arch degrees were being conferred under the authority of the various Lodge Masters.

This changed following the constitution of the Grand Lodge of Virginia in 1778. The Lodges were chartered to confer only the first three degrees. However, it appears that the Grand

Lodge conferred at least the Past Master and Royal Arch degrees during its Annual Communications. In 1790, the distance and expense of travel to Grand Lodge was cited by Wor. William Chambers of Staunton Lodge No. 13 as the reason that lodges should have the right to confer the Mark, Past Masters and Royal Arch degrees in a separate Chapter. His resolution was approved, and soon after this, Royal Arch chapters existed in Norfolk, Richmond, Dumfries, and Staunton. The growing number of Chapters and the increasing membership made it desirable that some rules and regulations be established for the government of Royal Arch Chapters. Robert Brough, Most Reverend High Priest of Norfolk United Royal Arch Chapter, visited Richmond Chapter and secured their support in sending out a proposal to form a Grand Chapter. This resulted in a Convention of Royal Arch Masons in the Borough of Norfolk on May 3, 1806. Unfortunately, representatives were present only from the Norfolk and Richmond Chapters, although the Chapters at Staunton and Dumfries had signified approval of the idea. Notwithstanding the absence of a quorum, a committee was appointed to draft a plan for the government of a Grand Chapter. Their plan was submitted, discussed, and adopted by those present. Among other items, it provided that “as soon as three of the above mentioned Chapters shall have ratified this constitution (either with or without amendments), notice shall be given to the several Chapters, and place for the holding of the next General Assembly shall be appointed.”

It took two years for the conditions to be met, but the first Assembly was called to be held in Mason’s Hall, Norfolk, Virginia, on May 1, 1808. Since that date occurred on Sunday, the first Grand Convocation did not begin until Monday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> and immediately adjourned while the Committee continued to work on its report. By Wednesday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, the work was completed to the point that the Companions

<sup>9</sup> [www.freemason-wa.org/Masonic%20Links/concordant.htm](http://www.freemason-wa.org/Masonic%20Links/concordant.htm)

<sup>10</sup> [www.mdmasons.org/default.asp](http://www.mdmasons.org/default.asp)

<sup>11</sup> [www.nymasons.org/cms/masonicbodies](http://www.nymasons.org/cms/masonicbodies)

selected temporary officers and opened a Royal Arch Chapter in Solemn Form. Robert Brough was elected and installed as the Most Reverend Supreme Grand High Priest of the newly constituted Most Excellent Supreme Grand Chapter of Royal Arch, Excellent and Super-Excellent Masons of Virginia.

The Grand Chapter continued its sessions through Saturday, May 7, 1808. Before closing, it ordered that Charters be issued to Norfolk United Chapter No. 1, Staunton Chapter No. 2, and Richmond Chapter No. 3. Although the Grand Chapter had assumed control of the Royal Arch degrees, it was not until January 18, 1820 that a resolution was sent to the Grand Lodge in which the Grand Royal Arch Chapter claimed exclusive authority over the degrees of Mark Master, Past Master, Most Excellent Master and Royal Arch Mason. Archer Bailey Gay<sup>12</sup> reports, “the records of the Grand Lodge indicate that the request of the Grand Chapter was ““negatived.”” Fortunately this has never become an issue between the two bodies.

In summary, nearly 200 years ago the degrees of the Royal Arch were separated from the control of the Grand Lodge, the only Masonic degrees that have this distinction. For this reason, I maintain that unlike all the other degrees, orders, and bodies of Masonry, the Royal Arch is neither appendant nor concordant, but ought to be considered as a part of the Lodge.

---

<sup>12</sup> A History of the Grand Chapter, Royal Arch Masons in the Commonwealth of Virginia, Archer Bailey Gay, Masonic Home Press, 1958 p202

## REFERENCES

My recollections of the original minutes of the Richmond and Norfolk Chapters dating from 1790 which were consulted in the Grand Chapter of Virginia library some years ago were helpful, but the Royal Arch history is mostly based on:

A History of the Grand Chapter, Royal Arch Masons in the Commonwealth of Virginia, Archer Bailey Gay, Masonic Home Press, 1958

Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia, Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Company, Inc., 1961

Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, Albert G. Mackey, The Masonic History Company, 1919.

## INTERNET SOURCES

The Free Dictionary

[www.thefreedictionary.com](http://www.thefreedictionary.com)

The Grand Lodge of Virginia:

[www.grandlodgeofvirginia.org/appendant\\_bodies/index.htm](http://www.grandlodgeofvirginia.org/appendant_bodies/index.htm)

The Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon

[freemasonry.bcy.ca/textfiles/concordant.html](http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/textfiles/concordant.html)

The Grand Lodge of Hawaii

[hawaiifreemason.org/bodies/](http://hawaiifreemason.org/bodies/)

The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts

[www.massfreemasonry.org/index.tpl?SID=1197407276896283&ng\\_view=18](http://www.massfreemasonry.org/index.tpl?SID=1197407276896283&ng_view=18)

The Grand Lodge of Minnesota

[www.mn-masons.org/page916.aspx](http://www.mn-masons.org/page916.aspx)

The Grand Lodge of Washington

[www.freemason-wa.org/Masonic%20Links/concordant.htm](http://www.freemason-wa.org/Masonic%20Links/concordant.htm)

The Grand Lodge of Maryland

[www.mdmasons.org/default.asp](http://www.mdmasons.org/default.asp)

The Grand Lodge of New York

[www.nymasons.org/cms/masonicbodies](http://www.nymasons.org/cms/masonicbodies)