

Comp. S. Stacker Williams introduces his splendid report on Correspondence with a valuable historical preface and opens with the following extract from a letter written to him by Bro. W.J. Hughan, the English Masonic historian:

"Thank you for letter and for reports, which are excellent, interesting and valuable, especially yours to the Grand Chapter of Ohio.

"'About 1740' will do well for the origin of the Royal Arch Degree, possibly, however, in the previous decade; but at any rate not earlier than say twenty years after the formation of the Grand Lodge of England, A. D., 1717. The country of its origin is still unknown, either England or France being the most probable solution. The 'Ancients' patronized the Royal Arch from their origin in 1751, not 1756, as you note. The degree is noted in the records as early as 1752. (See my 'Origin of the English Rite of Freemasonry,' and the publications of our 'Quatuor Coronati Lodge.')

'Ancient York Masons' for any Lodge in America is a misnomer as you state.

"The erroneous term arose through the 'Ancients' or 'Atholl' Grand Lodge mentioning Prince Edwin and York on their warrants, etc., but as all existing documents show, especially their records intact from 1752 to 1813, the Grand Lodge was always held in London, England.

"The old warrants in the United States of America also prove this fact. Yours is one of the best introductions on Royal Arch Masonry I have ever read."

Comp. Williams then proceeds:

"On consulting his 'Origin of the English Rite of Freemasonry,' we find the first reference made in the records of the Atholl Grand Lodge to the Royal Arch Degree to be of March 4 1752. It reads as follows:

"Grand Committee. — A formal complaint was made by several brethren against Thos. Phealon and John Mackay, better known as 'Leg of mutton Masons' for clandestinely making Masons for the mean consideration of a leg of mutton for dinner or supper.

"Upon examining some brothers whom they pretended to have made Royal Arch men, the parties had not the least idea of that secret. The Grand Secretary had examined Mackay, and stated that he had not the least idea or knowledge of Royal Arch Masonry, but instead thereof he had told the people he had deceived, a long story about twelve marble stones, &c, &c, and that the rainbow was the Royal Arch, with many other absurdities equally foreign and ridiculous.

"We showed in our last report that the Royal Arch degree was fabricated some years before the organization of the schismatic or Atholl Grand Lodge. While this set at rest the story that it was a creation of this body, and while it is also true that the regular Grand Lodge

propagated the degree, it must be admitted that the schismatic body was much more active in its propagation."

**Sources:**

Proceedings of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Canada at the annual convocation, 1895, report on Foreign Correspondence - OHIO